NOVEMBER 1981 NUMBER 45

THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

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Special Computer Issue

ROBOT WAR

PLAY-BY-PHONE ARRIVES

WINNING STRATEGY FOR *STARWEB*

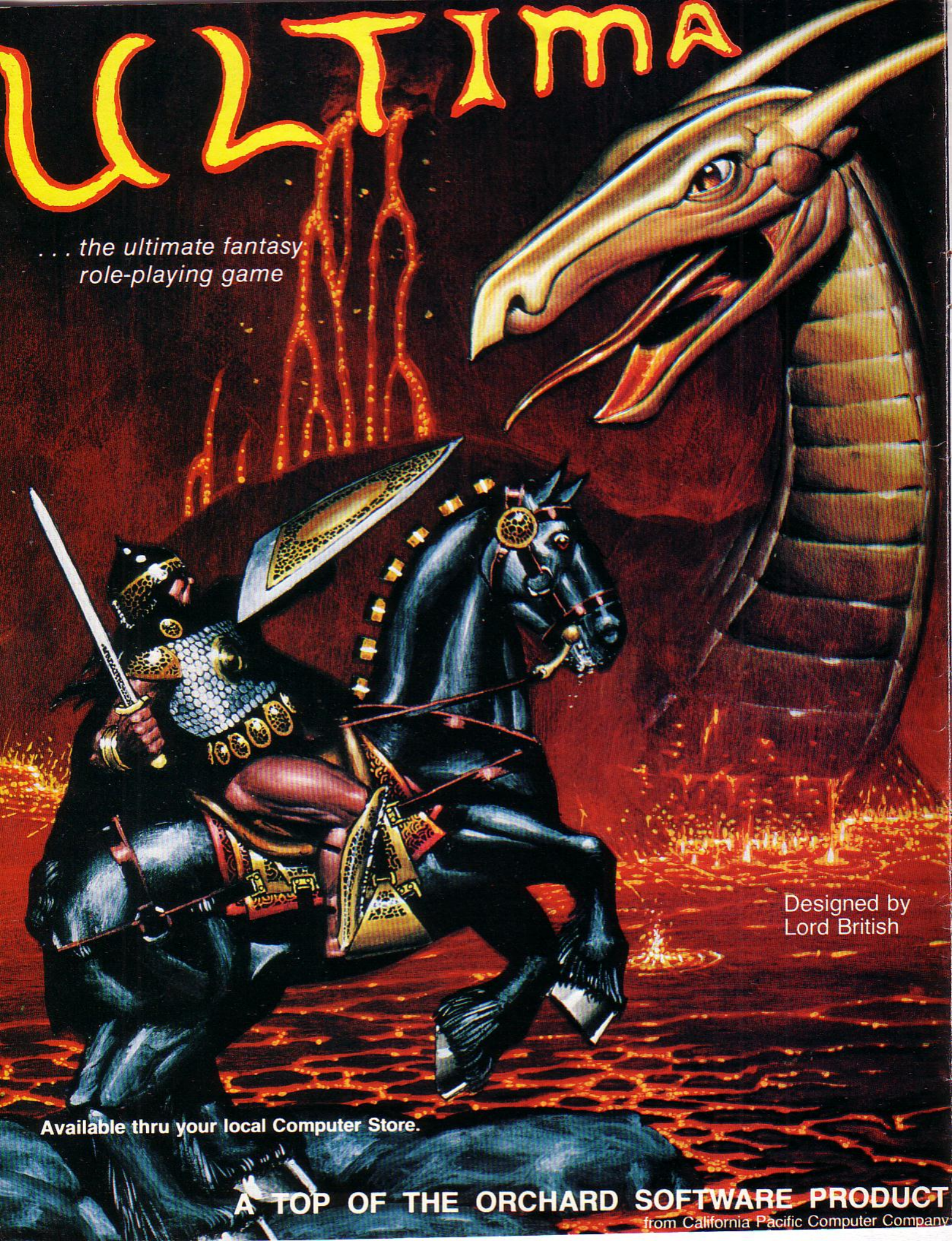
AUTOMATED SIMULATIONS COMPANY REPORT

DESIGNER'S NOTES FOR *CAR WARS*

GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS

NEBULA 19

11 PAGES OF REVIEWS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Publishers may wish to request a copy of our Recommended Artists List.

IN THIS ISSUE

It seemed like time for another computer issue . . . and here it is. Don't you non-computerized types give up, though. On page 12, we have an article about the newest wrinkle in gaming: play-by-phone. Unlike PBM gaming, it doesn't (yet) allow you the benefits of computer gaming without the expense. But its potential is big enough to make computer owners out of a lot of people who've held back so far.

Also on the computer front: a *Starweb* strategy article, a review of *Robot War*, and the Automated Simulations company report.

We've also got an article each on our own new hits. For you *Killer* fans, the long-awaited answer to the rotation-of-the-earth problem. And Chad Irby, co-designer of *Car Wars*, tells how it all got started. For you subscribers, there's a *Car Wars* bonus on the inside back mailer cover as well.

–Steve Jackson

Publisher: Steve Jackson
Editor: Forrest Johnson
Art Director: Denis Loubet
Assistant Editor: Aaron Allston
Contributing Editors:
W. G. Armintrout
William A. Barton
David Bolduc
Ronald Pehr
Lewis Pulsipher
Nick Schuessler
Bruce F. Webster
Business Manager: Elton Fewell
Circulation Manager: Aaron Allston
Utility Infielders:
Elisabeth Barrington
Monica Stephens
Bernice Fewell
Utility Outfielder: Chris Zakes

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Where We're Going

Okay. We're moved. Finally. Really.

I'm writing this IN the new office, so there isn't much doubt about it . . . although, the way things have been going, I suppose it's possible I could wake up and find it was all a dream, and we're still in the old offices. I don't even want to THINK about that!

And (as hinted last month), we didn't even wind up where we thought we would. The problems with the Metcalfe address were so bad that we kept looking – and, sure enough, we found a better place. The new address is 5311 South Congress, Austin, 78745. (*NOTE: Our mailing address remains P.O. Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760. DO NOT use the street address unless you are sending us something by UPS or Federal Express.*)

It's a very nice building – two stories, stone exterior – and we have it all to ourselves. We're proud of it – maybe one of these days we can get a photo taken to show you what it looks like. But the important thing is that for the first time in months we have enough room!

Cloud Behind the Silver Lining

Now the bad news. Between the uncertainty and delays involved in starting the move, and the hassles of the move itself, we are some two months behind schedule on new releases. The next batch of Cardboard Heroes, which had been scheduled for release in mid-September, will probably show up around Christmas. We hope. Other projects are coming along behind that. At the moment we're still taking stock of the situation – trying to figure out what can reasonably be expected to happen when, and fooling with critical-path charts and similar abstruse planning tools. Next month I hope to have an intelligent discussion of 1982 plans.

NEXT ISSUE

Our December issue will be a special TRAVELLER issue, with a complete adventure for TRAVELLER, an article on generating a new character type, and a featured review of FIFTH FRONTIER WAR. Also:

"The FBI Affair," an account of a KILLER game in Scottsdale, Arizona; and

A featured review of the ground-breaking computer game WIZARDRY.

ILLUMINATI

One new game to look for in 1982 is the one we took to Worldcon in draft form: *Illuminati.* You may have heard about the Illuminati – the secret society that many people feel is responsible for everything wrong with the world today, from nuclear war to fluoridation. Well, now you can become one of the dreaded Illuminati . . . trying to take over the world by controlling its power groups. Who knows . . . you could wind up controlling Wall Street, the FBI, the International Cocaine Smugglers . . . and since Wall Street controls the CIA, and the CIA controls the Mafia, you've got a pretty good power base . . . but your chief foe controls the IRS, and is taxing you every turn. Ah, well – even the Illuminati have problems!

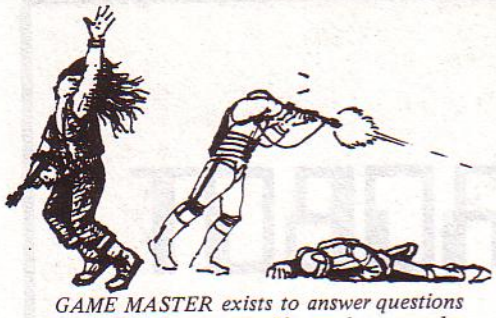
It looks as though it's going to be a good game . . . The premise is tongue-in-cheek; the game itself plays like a cross between dominoes, *Cosmic Encounter,* and the fantasies of a soap-box orator. Each player (up to six) takes the role of a branch of the Illuminati, each with its own special power – the Gnomes of Zurich, for example, are filthy rich, and the Disciples of Cthulhu are good at destroying other power groups. Each player also has his own special victory condition, but any player can win just by collecting enough subsidiary groups.

I don't know just when this one will be out, but we'll be running playtest tourneys at local conventions – if you're around Texas, you may get an early look at it.

OGRE

For you *Ogre* fans who have been wondering where the game is: An Oct. 12 trial date has been set for the Metagaming-SJ Games suit. If there's no continuance, and if the case doesn't get backed up so far on the docket that it can't be heard, there may actually be a resolution, and you may be able to buy the game again. More next month.

–Steve Jackson



GAME MASTER exists to answer questions on your favorite games. If you have a rules question or play problem, send it in. Questions to be answered will be chosen on the basis of general interest. They will be first referred to the game publisher or designer. If no response is received, GAME MASTER will offer its own interpretation of the rule. Sorry – no individual replies are possible.

Car Wars

1) On the rolls for reflexes: If player A rolls a 6; player B, a 6; and player C, a 5, then A & B would have a playoff. If, in the playoff, A rolls a 3 and B rolls a 5, would A's reflexes be 3; B's, 6; and C's, 5, or, after that playoff, would A have to roll off with C?

2) Can you place a driver in the middle of a power plant so as to be protected on all sides by the p.p.?

3) If a p.p. is destroyed by ramming or gunfire, does it explode (like it always does on TV)?

4) Can drivers and gunners sit in the van's or pickup's cargo areas?

5) Give me a good reason why weapons, extra magazines, fire extinguishers, and the p.p. can't be put in cargo space.

6) Can a laser or other weapon ignite the multiple fuel cell p.p.?

7) If not, why not?

8) Does fuel for the p.p. cost money?

9) Can you put a cycle in the back of a van or pickup like they do in all the James Bond movies? If so, how many spaces would it take, and would the adaptation (i.e., a ramp for loading and unloading the cycle) take any weight? And could you load the cycle while in motion (temporarily negating all back armor as the doors are opened)? What danger maneuver would this be?

10) How would an 18-wheeler be handled in *Car Wars* (for hijacking adventures)?

11) What would happen if about 50 pedestrians climbed up onto an already full-weight-capacity vehicle? Would the power plant overload?

12) Can more than one coat of paint be sprayed onto a windshield for cumulative effects?

13) Is Janet Jackson (one of the artists for TSG) related to you?

Thanks. I love the games by SJ Games, especially *Car Wars*. As for the 13 questions, you asked for it in TSG 42. Good luck.

David Burkhart

Chad's out of town, so I get to answer ALL the Car Wars questions. Lucky me!

1. Neither! A and B still have reflexes of 6, and C still has a 5 – but B's 6 is slightly better than A's since he won the playoff. Whenever A and B move at the same time, B can choose whether he wants to go first or second.

2, 3, and 4. No to all of these.

5. That's how the cars are built at the factory! If you want more weapon space, get a bigger car, or talk your referee into allowing an expensive customizing job.

6, 7. No, because oxygen poisons the catalysis reaction that drives the cells (which is why as of 1981 the reaction is commercially useless). How's that for a sneaky answer?

GAME MASTER

8. That's covered in the $50/week "character maintenance" charge.

9, 10. Wait for the supplements!

11. The car would bottom out and not be drivable.

12, 13. No.

–Steve Jackson

1. When a roll occurs as a result of Crash Table 1, and the vehicle hits a wall, should this situation be resolved as a T-bone crash? This could result in the car landing on the wrong side of the wall.

2. Can an oil jet be placed on automatic fire? If so, would it follow the strict one-shot-per-turn rule, or would it lay a continuous stream of oil? Also, can any of the other "dropped" weapons be placed on automatic?

Earl S. Cooley III

1. Resolve it as a T-bone. However, use common sense in re-dropping the counters as needed. Personally, if the wall were less than a foot high, I would allow the car to end up on either side of it OR on top. If it were 1 to 3 feet high, I would allow it to land on either side but not on top. If it were over 3 feet high, I would disregard any result that left it on the wrong side.

2. Any weapon, including dropped weapons, can be put on automatic. However, treat the result (oil, spikes, whatever) as a series of patches rather than a continuous stream; it games much better that way.

–SJ

RuneQuest

In *RuneQuest*, can a person parry an arrow with his shield?

How about a thrown axe, dart, dagger or javelin?

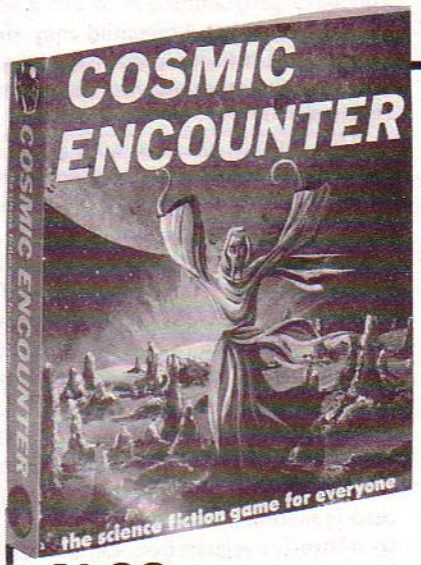
Marlon Clark

Chaosium's Steve Perrin answers:

Arrows, quarrels, and sling stones cannot be parried with a shield. However, if the character is aware of the missile user and facing more-or-less in the missileer's direction, he can specify that he is covering certain Hit Locations with the shield, and, if the arrow hits that location, the arrow must go through the shield to get to the shieldbearer. A small shield can cover one Hit Location besides the shield arm, a medium shield can cover two contiguous locations, and a large shield can cover three locations. Thus, a Large shield could cover a character's Head, Chest, and right arm, a medium shield could cover the character's Head and Chest, and a small shield could cover the Head.

A thrown weapon can be parried if the character is aware the object is being thrown.

In both cases, the shield cannot be used to parry a melee attack on the same combat turn.



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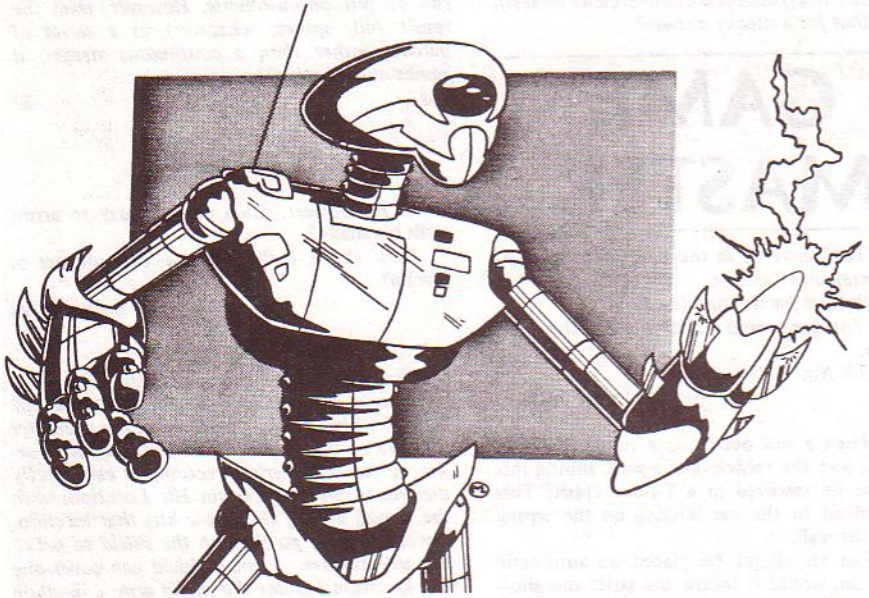

ROBOT WAR

by Harry White

Here is a game that is genuinely new and, for the time being, unique. It will soon have its imitators.

ROBOTWAR is a combination of several programs which allow the player to select his or her own simulated robot and place it into an arena on the Apple's high-resolution graphics screen along with up to four other robots selected from a menu. He presses a key and then watches the bloody (oily) and noisy battle which ensues. It is sometimes comical and usually entertaining.

The game comes with five pre-programmed automatons already prepared. They are all different. "Random" moves and shoots randomly. "Bottom" scampers back and forth along the bottom of the screen taking pot-shots at anything north of it. "Target" just sits there and waits to be destroyed. "Square" moves in a square, "Scanner" sits and looks for something to shoot at, moving only if damaged.

The gamer may schedule one battle or a series of several battles, with the computer keeping cumulative scores. If that were all there was to the game it would wear thin very shortly. A couple of hours would exhaust the possibilities of those mindless little machines.

But that's not all there is to it. Included on the disk are the means to create and save your own robots, programmed to move, scan, shoot and react to damage in the way you direct them via their computer brains. ROBOTWAR has its own simple programming language. There is a "test bench" which provides simulations of the robot's actions. Completed machines can be saved to a disk from which they may be loaded into memory and placed in the game's arena, ready for a fight. But be warned! Once in the arena you cannot intervene. Unless you have programmed it to avoid such a catastrophe, your brainchild may simply batter itself into junk against the nearest wall. (This is somewhat like rearing children.)

The concept of creating a game component and inserting it into competition to do battle with opponents created by other gamers, then letting the game proceed with no further intervention from the players, has many possibilities. Tournaments, for example, could be fought by the toughest masterpieces of several competitors. This could even be done by exchanging disks through the mail or over the telephone by way of modems on computers. There is a hint that Muse has not overlooked these possibilities. A postcard is included with the manual and disk to return for registration. On the card is a blank to check if you wish to join a "club." Excellent merchandising. An attractive item for computer freaks.

That may be ROBOTWARS' most serious shortcoming. If you are not into computers far enough to have a pretty thorough knowledge of programming, then ROBOTWAR will be tough sledding. If you own an Apple for gaming only then it may not be for you.

If you do, however, have an understanding of your Apple and can program at least trivial matters, then you'll enjoy this game. The 75-page manual is well organized and direct, though without an index. Physically and graphically it is a quality item. Muse means for it to last a long time and it will teach you much of what you need to know.

If you want to learn more about computers or teach someone else, then this is also an undercover learning aid. If you look, for example, you will find that the "test bench" is a program debugging tool not too different from utilities used by professional programmers. You soon may learn other things, too, such as trigonometry and statistical analysis, as you strive to make your creations more competitive. But its main merit is that the game is intriguing, challenging and fun. It has the making of a classic, i.e., it can be enjoyed at many levels, depending on what you put into it.

A gripe. This game accesses the disk a lot, which causes wear on the medium and increases the chances of the disk crashing. Provisions are made to store the robots on a separate disk but that means a lot of disk swapping which isn't easy on things either. You need to make a backup copy to guard against all this, but, alas, you cannot. The disk is copy protected. To be fair, Muse does offer replacements for $10.00 if your disk should be lunched.

ROBOTWAR is worth the $39.95 (choke!) price. And if you don't have an Apple, but do own some other brand of personal computer, just wait – there'll be a similar game for you soon. It has to happen.

ROBOTWAR (Muse Software); $39.95. 48K disk for the Apple II with Applesoft in ROM, DOS 3.2 or 3.3, Silas Warner. From one to five players; playing time 10 minutes. Published 1981.

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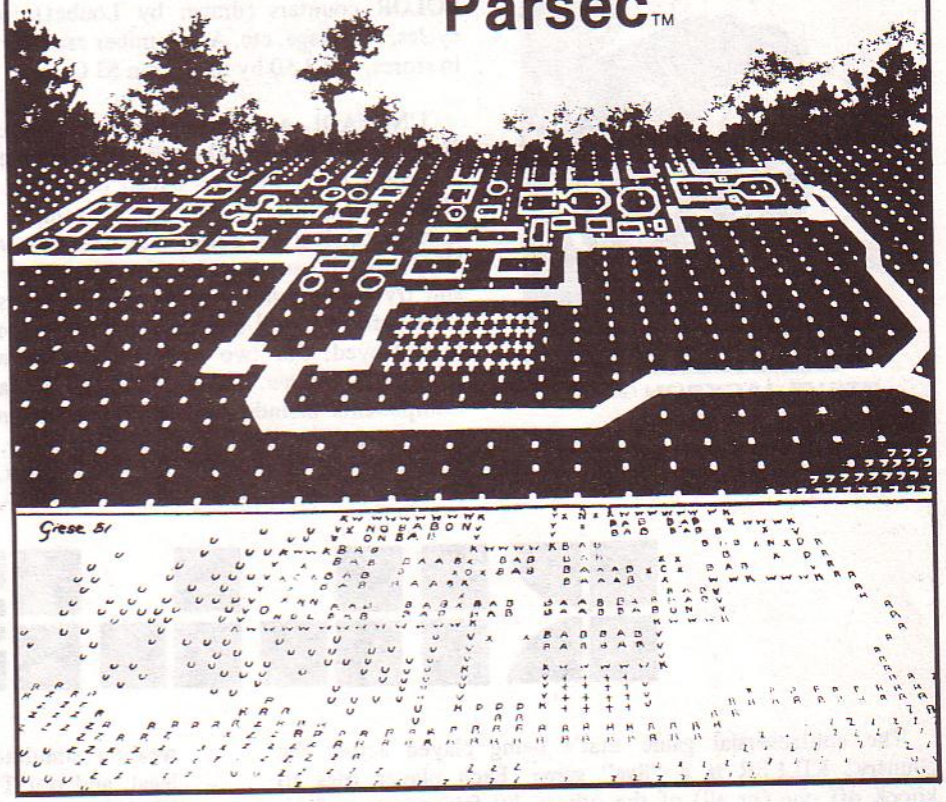

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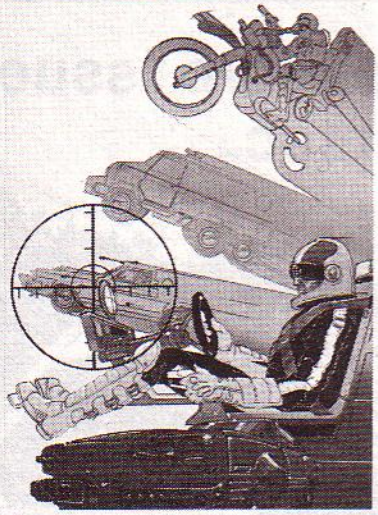
CAR WARS

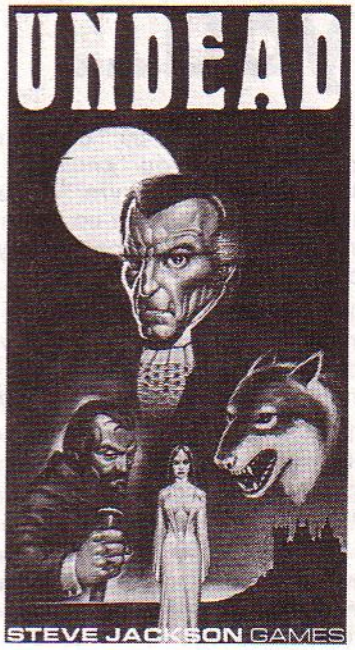


STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Ever want to blow away the car that cut you off from the freeway . . . drop a few spikes to discourage a tailgater . . . take on a cycle gang with the twin .50-cals under your hood? Now you can.

In CAR WARS, players design freeway combat vehicles, with weapons, armor, and even body style. Then they take them out on the roads of the future – to come home 'aces,' or crash and burn.

Designed by Chad Irby and Steve Jackson. Includes 24-page rulebook, road grids, and FULL-COLOR counters (drawn by Loubet) for cars, cycles, wreckage, etc. Any number can play. $3.00 in stores, or $3.50 by mail from SJ Games.



UNDEAD! A role-playing game inspired by Bram Stoker's classic *Dracula.* The vampire Count has come to London to spread death and terror. Moving on a map of the city, the vampire player tries to conceal his coffins and find new victims. His heroic pursuers search for his hiding places and try to alert the city. When the players meet, they battle – until the vampire flees, or one side is destroyed. For two or more players, with or without a referee. Designed by Steve Jackson. Components include *full-color* counters and city map; 24-page rulebook, and combat maps. $3.00 in your hobby shop, or $3.50 by mail direct.

KILLER

The controversial game that's being played across the country! KILLER is a "live" game. Each player tries to knock off one (or all) of the others, by fair means or foul. Usually foul. Waterguns or dart-guns replace pistols; an exploding balloon becomes a bomb, and so on. This is the first published set of rules for doing your friends in . . . without hurting them. Includes scenario suggestions; dozens of weapon simulators; and hints on keeping your game safe, legal, and not TOO mind-boggling to the rest of the world! KILLER is not for everybody – but if you want to test your reflexes and ingenuity in a way no paper game ever will, then this just may be for you.

Rulebook written by Steve Jackson. $5.00 in stores, or $5.50 by mail direct.

GAME DESIGN: Theory and Practice

Everything you ever wanted to ask about game design (but didn't know where to start). This authoritative book covers the field from both the theoretical/mathematical viewpoint and the practical angle. The general theory and history of wargaming lead into a detailed nuts-and-bolts discussion of combat, terrain, mapping and movement, component design, professional playtesting techniques, and more. A special chapter covers role-playing game design.

GAME DESIGN is co-authored by two authorities in the field. Nick Schuessler is publisher of the iconoclastic *Journal of WWII Wargaming* and has taught a University of Texas-sponsored course in wargame design. Steve Jackson is designer and/or publisher of several best-selling games. Whether you're interested in "simulation," "playability," or both, this book covers what you need to know. Much of this material originally appeared in *The Space Gamer*, but has been extensively revised and updated, with new material added (including a full bibliography).

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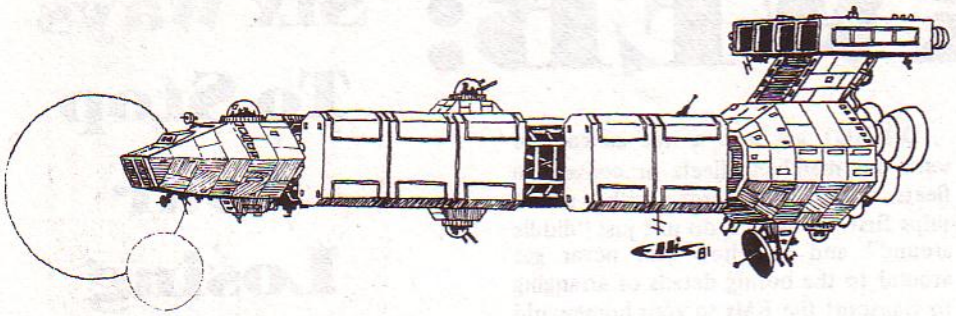


AUTOMATED SIMULATIONS

When Jim Connelley and Jon Freeman started Automated Simulations, they both had extensive experience as war gamers. Jon has published a number of magazine articles and two books on the subject: *The Playboy Winner's Guide to Board Games* (Playboy Press) and *The Complete Book of War Games* (Consumer Guide). While Jon has concentrated on designing Automated Simulations' games, Jim has been the principal programmer and business mind behind the company.

Then, as now, the philosophy has been to produce the best possible games. We've tried in our games to take maximum advantage of the capabilities the computer presents us with. High quality games also mean complete and well-written documentation.

Although this may seem obvious, two and three years ago it bordered on revolutionary. When we were evaluating other products to get an idea of the company's potential, we found most computer games came with few introductions. Most that did included them as part of the computer program.

Starting with an 8K Pet in the fall of 1978, Jim and Jon developed *Starfleet Orion*, a two-player space battle game. A TRS-80 version was quickly added, followed by *Invasion Orion*, a solitaire companion game to *Starfleet*.

The summer of 1979, though, was probably the most crucial phase in the company's development to date. We added products for the Apple computer, and we introduced *Temple of Apshai*, which recently won the Charles Roberts computer game of the year award at this year's Origins. *Temple* took us off in a new direction with fantasy role-playing, and ever since it has consistently been our most popular game.

Another turning point came in early 1981, when we introduced the name Epyx. This was not a name change. We're still Automated Simulations. But we have had plans for, and have just introduced, a new line of games distinctly different from what we'd done in the past. We wanted to distinguish this new line from the rest of our games, and a way to do that was to give each line its own name. Hence, we have Epyx for our role-playing and traditional war games, and a new name, Mind Toys, for our new line of educational games.

The first in our Mind Toys group is *Jabbertalky*, which is just now being released. *Jabbertalky* is a programmable word game, which means players can add to or change the vocabulary lists stored on computer. The game includes both anagrams and cryptograms; but it's educational because it can teach the player new words, spelling and parts of speech.

In addition to expanding into new areas and introducing new products, we have made an effort to keep our older releases current with changing technology. For instance, *Invasion Orion* now has a two-player option. We've continued to develop better graphics, added sound and are constantly searching for new ways to cram more detail into each game.

For the would-be designer, another change has occurred. Where once all of Automated Simulations' games were designed in-house, we're now actively soliciting games for publication. One of our new releases, *Sorcerer of Siva*, which is a role-playing game for magic users, was written by a 15-year-old high school student! *Sorcerer of Siva* is actually the fourth game we've published that we didn't develop in-house. Others include *Upper Reaches of Apshai* (another new one), *Tuesday Morning Quarterback* and *Dragon's Eye*.

Dragon's Eye is one of the first new programs for the Pet from us in almost a year. Thanks to rapid changes in computer design (and prices), the Pet seems to be gradually going the way of old soldiers.

Now we're concentrating on the Apple, TRS-80, and Atari computers. We will continue to look at other computers as they become popular, but we have no definite plans for supporting new machines as yet.

The key in developing all of our games has always been to look at an idea as a game first and as a computer program second. We ask if the idea would make an interesting, fun game, and whether putting it on computer makes sense. Computer tic-tac-toe simply has no advantage over paper and pencil. A lot of good board games would make crummy computer games, and vice versa.

If an idea is accepted, we analyze the feasibility of programming it and determine how long it will take, assign a staff to the project and set up a schedule. Then a rough prototype is created. In-house testing follows, both to fine tune the design and to work out program "bugs," or errors. Finally, we invite some of our Bay Area customers to test the game further before it is released.

A project now in the prototype stage is a combination strategy-arcade game for one or two players. This game (as yet untitled) should prove to be substantially different from any of our previous releases. Each player has a limited number of shots he can fire from one of his two "cannons." He maneuvers a set of pieces both to set up for a shot at his opponent's goal and to block his own goal from attack. The "ball" bounces off the pieces and, hopefully, into the goal area. It's something akin to playing racquetball in an ever-changing maze, using the walls, instead of a racquet, to return your shot. We expect to release this in December.

Over the next few months, we'll also have more games for the Atari and new expansion modules for *Temple of Apshai* and *Hellfire Warrior*. Documentation will continue to be an important part of our games, as will the one-key response structure dominant in our current releases. And, keeping up with the rapid changes in microcomputers will be an ongoing challenge.

All in all, we're looking for 1982 to be our most interesting year yet.

Joyce Lane
Advertising Manager

STARWEB: Six Ways To Stop Your Losing Streak

by W. G. Armintrout

A lot of people manage to lose consistently at STARWEB. No matter how many games they've played, or what position they've tried out, these folks go down to defeat again and again. How come?

Born losers. And they're a bunch of born losers because, despite all of their experience on the battle lines of the Web, they haven't bothered to figure out these six fundamental concepts of the game –

I – FULL EXPANSION

Go to every unowned world you can reach in the starting turns of the game. There is no reason not to! Here are the reasons why expansion, as swift as possible, is mandatory:

KEYS – the more worlds you arrive at first, the more of these you'll have. A shortage of keys can crucially limit a player.

ARTIFACTS – same as keys above. Don't be afraid of picking up Plastic Artifacts – if you've gone to enough worlds, you should have at least enough good artifacts to cancel out the bad ones. And even bad artifacts have their good uses.

WORLDS – worlds mean points for most players, particularly pirates, empire builders and apostles. They are also militarily important – the more worlds you've got between your homeworld and your nearest hostile neighbor, the stronger your defenses will be.

There are some players – merchants particularly – who seem to think that expansion is optional or a waste of time. This attitude has one large problem. Every world which a non-expanding player leaves untouched will go to some other player. If that player is a pirate, apostle or empire builder, that is tantamount to giving him free points! Plus the extra keys and artifacts!

Remember: winning at STARWEB means not only making a lot of points for yourself, but making sure that others aren't doing the same thing faster than you are.

II – FULL PRODUCTION

It is vital to get all 30 industries on the homeworld producing as early as possible. There are precious few exceptions to this rule.

DO NOT get into a war instead, or send out merchant fleets or conversion fleets, or stud your borders with I- and P-ships first. Above all, do not just "diddle around" and somehow just never get around to the boring details of arranging to transport the RMs to your homeworld on a regular basis.

This rule, one of the most obvious of all, is disregarded constantly. It raises an odd question – are players really out to win, or just to have fun? Are the two goals incompatible, or is keeping track of RM shipments so tedious that it takes all the joy out of playing?

It's a personal decision. Some people want nothing more out of STARWEB than a chance to blow a few people away (I've even seen a conquering merchant once). But if you want to win a game you've got to become serious about building ships. Ships are the tools that win games. They are the berserker's power to kill, the apostle's power to convert, and the artifact collector's power to collect and protect his artifacts.

The only exception to a full-production priority is the demanding imperative of full expansion in the first few turns of the game. Full expansion must come first. The two goals need not be mutually exclusive – as soon as keys are no longer needed for exploring, send them cruising for RMs. Send small fleets to explore – just two or three ships per key – so you can use larger fleets for carrying raw materials.

III – ALLIANCE

If I were looking for an enemy to attack, I would have one type of player in mind immediately. The loner. Except for the player who has dropped out of the game already, the loner is the easiest kill. You know that a loner won't have any allies to step in and foul up the invasion.

Loners are recognizable by their uncommunicativeness. They won't talk to you. Or they talk only by DM. Or maybe they talk quite a bit, but they don't seem to be listening – just sending out a constant stream of threats, or the same old broken record about "maybe" trading a few artifacts in a vague manner. A loner is a player who, for one reason or another, doesn't seem able to cooperate with any of the other players.

To win at STARWEB you can't be all by yourself. For one thing, most victories come from taking over the possessions of other players. One player can't make much of an attack – he'll find himself limited to making fruitless attacks on equal-strength neighbors and involving himself in a never-ending war, or he will limit himself to poaching on down-and-out neighbors already under attack. You can't expect to make a worthwhile attack unless you can pit two players against one (which can still be dicey unless the victim is weak or not too skilled), and three-to-one or four-to-one attacks are even better in terms of ensured success and speed of operations. The ideal alliance would be so powerful and well-coordinated that it could fall on one player after another in an unending string of victories.

There are only two criteria for selecting an ally: cooperation and shared goals. Cooperation is most important. Many players settle for an "alliance" that is little more than an agreement not to invade each other and a promise to keep in touch every third turn. While this may be acceptable if you want to maintain the status quo, it won't work if you want to seize territory or gain objectives. The ideal alliance is one where all members trade copies of their print-outs the moment the results arrive from Flying Buffalo, and where the members keep in touch faithfully every turn to iron out any differences that have risen and to make plans for the next few turns.

Shared goals are important also. Two empire builders would have trouble working together, since they would both want the exact same things. But an empire builder and a berserker might make a bet-

ter team – the berserker primarily wants worlds only so he can destroy them (which can be done just as well late in the game as early), while the empire builder might be satisfied holding on to worlds for most of the game with the understanding that he would turn them over to the berserker when the game seemed near its close. Diversity in an alliance can be an asset since it means that that team will have more options (for instance, a pirate faced with a world crawling with I- and P-ships might call on his apostle ally to capture the world by converting it – perhaps saving time and ships). Cooperation is more important than shared goals, however. I would rather be allied with a fellow pirate whom I trusted and worked well with than to be allied with a merchant who didn't trust me near his homeworld and kept missing turns.

Alliances have one more feature – they are contagious. If one alliance springs up, it is highly likely that frightened neighbors will form a counter-alliance. It might then come down to a contest between alliances. More likely, the alliances will temporarily ignore each other while they go for the small fry – the lone players.

Unless you've got incredible luck or the showmanship of P. T. Barnum, there is no way you can win at STARWEB without a partner. In fact, loners will often find it hard to last until the end of the game.

IV – TRACKING POINTS

There are three kinds of STARWEB victory:

(1) TECHNICAL – coming in first, second, or third score-wise in a game.

(2) RATINGS – Ending the game with a score that boosts your standing in the overall ratings.

(3) PERSONAL – Fulfilling your personal goal, such as launching yourself on a private vendetta against artifact collectors or some such thing.

Most players figure they can't get a Technical Victory, and don't care about a Ratings Victory since it seems so long-term, and so they muddle along without any real intentions other than to shoot somebody up and have a fun time. These are the players who condemn themselves to losing games.

If you want to win – whether you're going for a Technical or a Ratings victory – you have to do one simple thing. Track points. It is something that few if any players do well. Why should you track points?

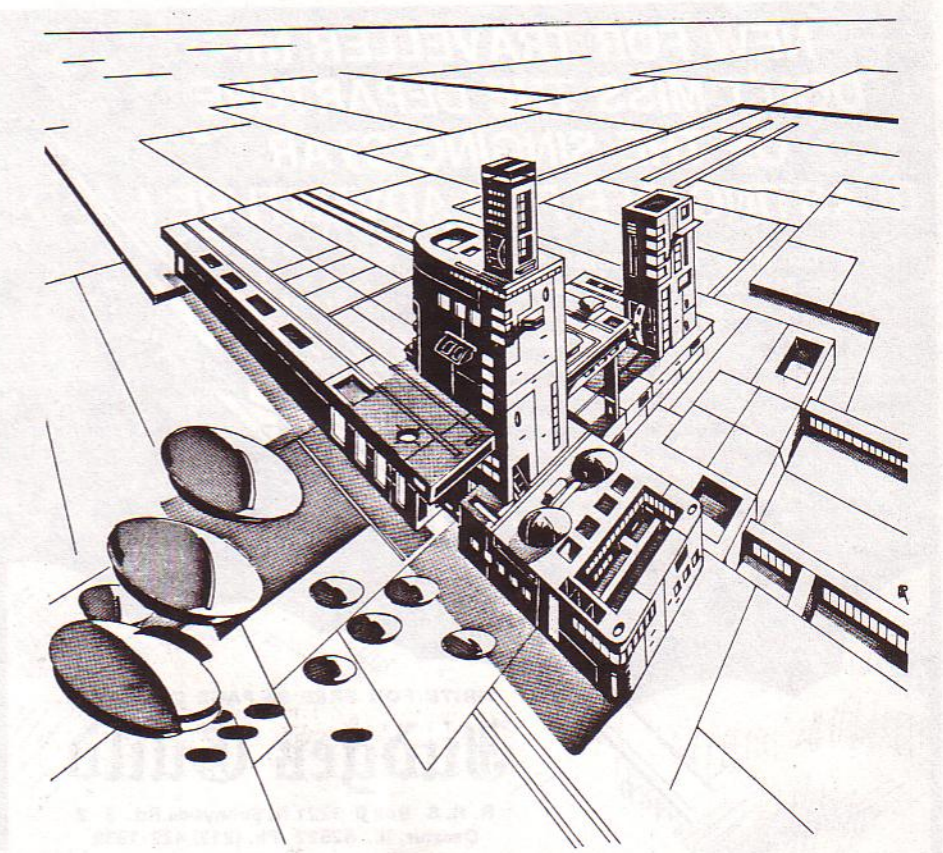
First, you should keep track of your own point score so you can see how you are doing. If you have a point goal in mind (say, 7500 points by Turn 21) you should know if you are on target. If you aren't on target, you should know what it will take to put you back on course – an extra 50 points, or a surplus 500 points per turn.

Second, you've got to know how you are doing relative to your fellow players. If someone else is climbing faster than you are, you have two options – figure out a way to climb faster yourself, or figure out a way to stop your opponent. You might also want to be thinking about how you look to your opponents – if you get out too far ahead of the pack, you might find them ganging up on you and going for your throat . . .

Most players track points by intuition. "My goodness, TANRIT has 5000 points this turn . . . (shuffle of papers) . . . he had 3000 two turns ago, and 1700 on Turn Sixteen . . . I think he's climbing sort of fast." That method is slip-shod (too much chance that you'll forget to check on some obscure player's score – like the quiet apostle converting his worlds on the far side of the Web), unscientific (too often you won't catch the sudden upsurge in a berserker's score until it's too late), and irregular (too many turns you'll forget all about checking scores).

The best way is to make a simple graph. Some people will look upon this as an acute hardship, but all it takes is five minutes to draw it up and a few seconds to update it each turn. Let one axis be score (say, 200 points/box) and the other turns (1 turn/box). The first thing you'll notice is how easy it is to single out the winners from the losers – the ranking of players on Turn 12 will often be the same at the end of the game. Scores tend to climb at a regularly increasing rate. Someone who got ahead by Turn 12 will likely keep right on climbing till the finish line unless he goofs or gets stepped on. The most important scores to watch are those of merchants and berserkers. They can climb at an astounding rate. Their favorite trick is to keep a low score for half the game and then make their play, counting on the fact that most players aren't even paying attention to scores lower than 2500 by that time of the game. By the time anyone catches on, that berserker or merchant will be so far ahead that he'll be impossible to stop.

If you want to win, you've got to track points. And if you want to track points right, you've got to do it regularly and you've got to watch both the score itself and the rate at which the score is climbing. To do it right, you need to graph it out.



V – THE BACKSTAB

There is a time for everything, and the Backstab should be in every player's repertoire.

Am I advocating a doctrine of deliberately misleading and betraying your friends? Hardly. That would be self-destructive, especially in the long run when your reputation begins to spread among the playership. No, what I am talking about is the importance of knowing how and when to get rid of a rotten ally.

WHEN: You should get rid of any ally if his score is rising dramatically faster than your own. An alliance is held together by the belief that its members will win TOGETHER – which means deliberately arranging their scores to rise at approximately the same rate. If one ally is not holding to this agreement, then steps must be taken (after all, part of his meteoric rise has theoretically come about because of the help he received from you and the other allies).

The classic case is that of the merchant, who makes a peaceful deal to run RMs around a player's empire in order to get points. If the merchant has made enough deals like that, his score will shoot through the roof. Many times he will win because no one is cold-hearted enough to turn on their "ally." In reality, what the merchant has done is to take advantage of the other players in order to win the game. He has "conned" them.

But I see nothing wrong with knocking out a player who is trying to beat me, alliance or not. If he is trying to beat me, then he can hardly be an ally.

HOW: The technicalities depend on the situation. You can hamstring a merchant by zapping his transport fleets. Empire builders are harder to kill, simply because they get their points from a lot of little worlds – to stop their point climb requires stripping them of worlds, which can take many turns. It also depends on how well you know your ally – can you get by with a demonstration of your power, or do you have to go all-out against him?

The most important thing is to be prepared. Be aware that an ally might take advantage of you, and have a plan in mind for handling it. I am not suggesting that players should spend all their time on paranoid speculation. Rather, they should not be overly naive.

VI – A GAME-PLAN

The last ingredient for success at STARWEB is some idea where you are going. A majority of players make their decisions turn by turn, with no thought of a game-long plan. That's why most players aren't winners.

There is not room to tell you how to design a Game-Plan – that could take entire articles, depending on player-types and potential alliances. Two apostles working together would certainly have a different plan than an alliance of empire builders and berserkers. But a game-plan should cover these points:

(1) POINTS – Set a goal. Figure out how many points per turn it will take for you to win the game. Then figure out the kind of things you will have to do to get these points.

(2) TEAMWORK – Figure out which ally will do what, and who gets what. Is the empire builder supposed to guard the home front, or go out fighting? Are the artifacts to be shared equally, or go to whoever finds them first? The idea is to plan the alliance so that its members share burdens equally while getting roughly equal point increases. (Anything else leads to friction within the alliance.)

(3) GEOGRAPHY – As accurate a map as possible is vital in STARWEB, even if you have to pass your own map out to get the information. Based on the location of the players, you must plan which you will conquer/convert/support in which order. Geography is important because of momentum – once your fleet goes out in one direction, you'll only be wasting time later if you plan to bring it all the way home and then send it in a new direction. The most efficient plans will call for traveling from one player to another player adjacent to the first. The trick is to plan for it – most players unexpectedly find themselves with fleets bogged down somewhere with no idea where to go next.

(4) CONTINGENCIES – What to do if some other player starts to run away with the game? What if one ally drops out, or won't cooperate? What to do if the plan falls apart because of unexpected enemies, sneak attacks or someone else trying to join up and become a friendly?

So many players stumble about aimlessly, with no better plans than to attack the weak and avoid the strong. The good player must have some sort of strategy, based on his need for points and his available allies.

These are the basics. Any player can take advantage of these rules in order to improve his play, if he'll just believe it's possible and put in the think-work necessary to win. There is no mystique about being successful at STARWEB. It's only a matter of making a determined effort to do more than just play along.

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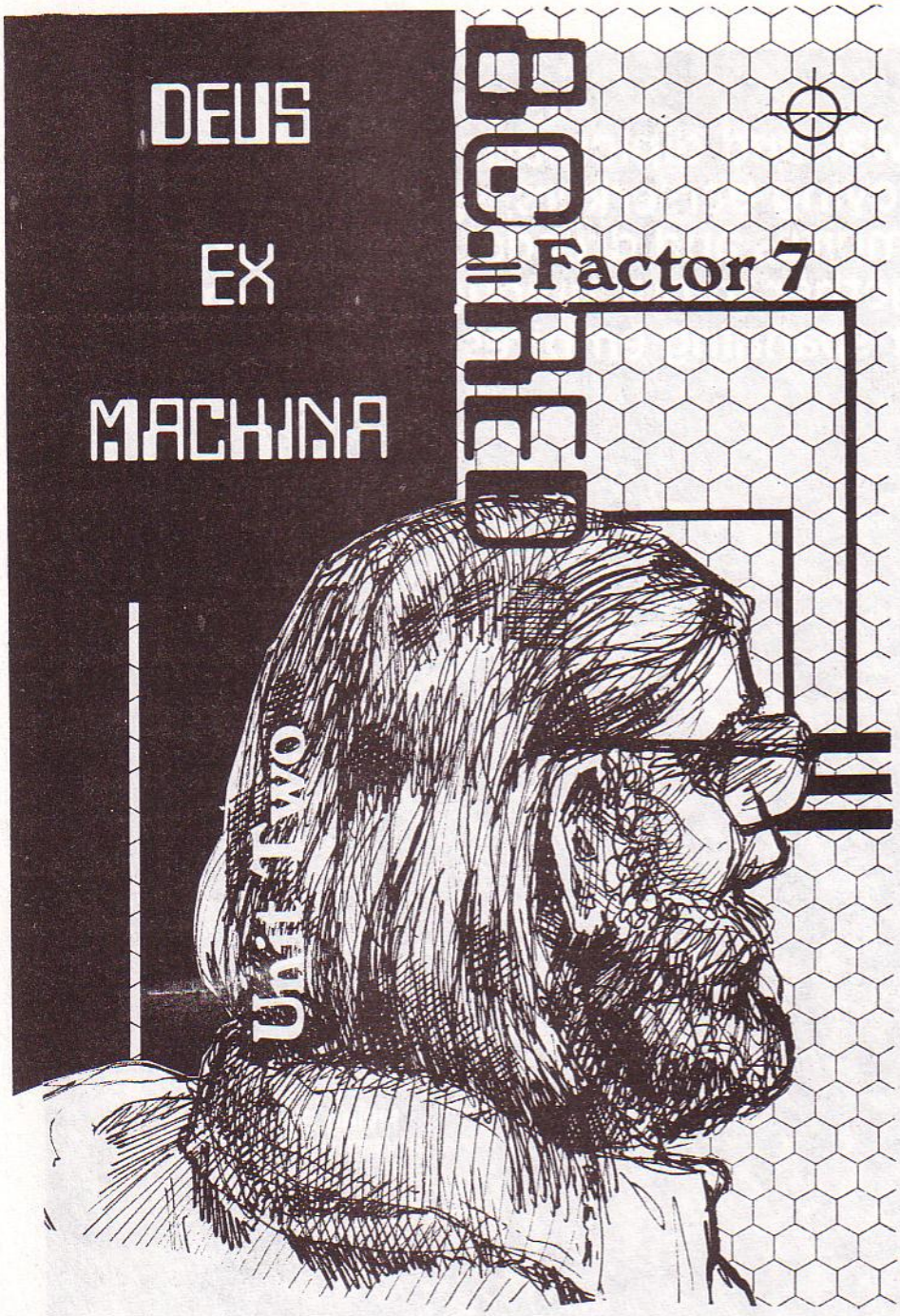

Play-by-Phone Arrives

by Neil Shapiro

There's a spooky old mansion waiting for you to visit. And even though it's in Evanston, Illinois, the GameMaster mansion is only a phone call away.

And, what a time a visitor can expect! Every room of that large structure is devoted to games. No matter what your interests, from playing *Diplomacy* on the first floor to wandering about adventuresome caverns in the basement – if you're a gamer you'll feel right at home.

Computer to Computer

Though the mansion will seem real enough, it's only a series of computer programs running on a minicomputer on the GameMaster's more usual business premises. The GameMaster computer, however, is hooked to the telephone line and that's how all the magic begins.

A device called a *modem* must be used with your computer. A modem *mo*dulates outgoing information into the audio tones for the phone line. At the other end, another modem then *dem*odulates the audio tones back into computer pulses.

Almost all home computers have modems available either from the computer manufacturer as an accessory or from a secondary manufacturer. Using software designed for your own computer/modem combination, talking via your home computer to another computer is no harder than typing and reading the words as they scroll by on your video (or printer's) display.

Dialing GameMaster

Once you are set up with a home computer and modem (or a terminal), you're ready to play. The only problem is your phone bill, for it *does* cost whatever your long distance charges are to Evanston, Illinois, plus GameMaster's membership and hourly fees. (More on this at the end of this article.)

Once you've dialed GameMaster, the doorkeeper greets you (his words appearing on your computer display) and asks if you are a member. You supply him with your special membership number and you are admitted through the front door.

Once past the door you'll want to begin exploring the intricate layout of the mansion. If you have full membership privileges you'll want to check the map which is included in the three-ring binder GameMaster supplies as documentation. But if not – don't fear getting lost. Just make your first stop the balcony in the library which contains all of the documentation on the games and where they are located.

You move around the house by using "walk commands." All you have to do is to type forward, backward, left, right, up or down to move. Each time you move, the GameMaster system describes the room you have entered or what you are facing.

Not surprisingly, GameMaster also offers a futuristic alternative to even this video-style of walking. You can use the "portal." If you know the name of the room you are heading for you just have to type "portal" and enter that room's name. Then, you are immediately sent there.

One of the first things you will want to do after familiarizing yourself just a little bit with all that the mansion offers, is to check out the mailroom, which is just down the hall from the front door. The mailroom is where you can send private messages to other players, receive messages, even communicate personally with the GameMaster by leaving him a note in a suitably described mailbox.

Invasion Orion: Can You Defeat The Klaatu and Your Computer?

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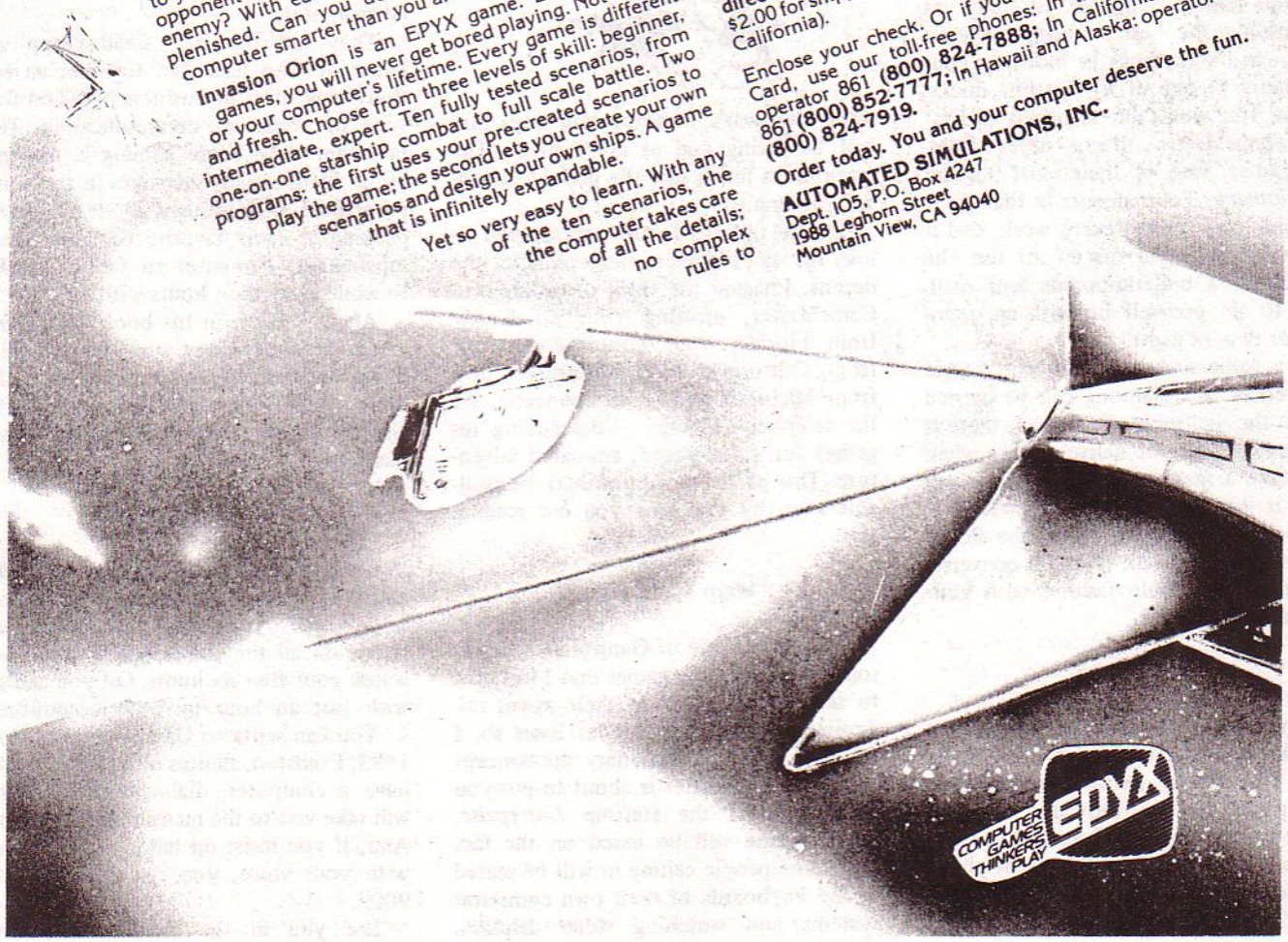

Getting Into the Games

Playing a game in the mansion will prove quite different from any playing experience you have had before. For one thing, you are paying by the minute as you play. So, even though the GameMaster does have a cardroom and other games such as that, you will – in my opinion – want to avoid these and skip right into the special games that a computer system can present you with, or old favorites it can enhance.

A game called *18-Wheeler* is a new, multi-player offering that we found to be an excellent introduction to the system as well as challenging to play. If you're lucky there will be another gamer waiting in the alcove of the room and you can arrange a match right away. But, as in most of the multi-player games, you will likely have to first use the GameMaster bulletin board to advertise for an opponent, or perhaps drop in on the game during one of the system's many tournaments.

Though *18-Wheeler* can be played solitaire (as can many of the games) it *is* more fun as a multi-player game. Up to four players can join in as each player becomes a truck dispatcher. You use a map of the U.S. and direct loads of cargo from city to city. Each time you make it to a city you receive a payoff. Strategy lies in choosing the best routings for your fleet – and sometimes in blocking your opponents at one of the loading docks.

And you won't be surprised to hear that GameMaster offers other PBM-type games. One of their most popular is *Diplomacy*. Tournaments in that game are conducted almost every week, and it is usually a simple matter to use the GameMaster's bulletin-boards and mail-room to set yourself up with an opponent, or two, or eight.

In a game such as *Diplomacy*, secret conferences and planning can be carried out via the mailroom. Of course, there is no need to wait for delivery – so when you leave a message to a player he can check it minutes later. If the message is not secret, you can just go to the alcove of the room and talk (type) a conversation in a roundtable fashion with your allies and/or enemies.

FRP Games

If you have ever played one of the popular computer adventure role-playing games you already know how much fun these games can be. Basically, they are similar to the D&D, T&T style of gaming. You have a character with certain physical and mental attributes, all of which govern how well that character can carry out the movements, combats and other assignments you give him (or her).

You move your character around a dungeon, fighting monsters and other characters until you have amassed enough treasure to retire from the dungeon with a solid feeling of accomplishment. As characters get deeper into the dungeon the challenges – and treasure – become larger.

If adventure games are your bag, you will be sure to want to visit the basement caverns in the GameMaster. Here you move down long, dimly lit hallways, fight evil creatures, see beauty and horror – all described for you right on the screen of your video display. Computerists with the Radio Shack TRS-80, the Atari 800 or similar home computers will read text descriptions. Apple II gamers have another option – and if seeing is believing, this will make a believer of you.

The Apple II can be equipped with some optional software available from the GameMaster called a "Caverns Driver Program." Once this program is installed in your Apple's memory, visiting the caverns can be as spooky as a week at a dowager mother-in-law's.

For the Apple will actually draw you a three-dimensional, on-screen view of the

walls, doorways, monsters and traps that will be facing you at every turn. (The maze looks much like the popular *Akalabeth* program.)

Future options in the caverns will allow for multi-player missions into the depths. Imagine the thrill of calling into GameMaster, meeting your elf buddy from Florida, your hobbit companion from California, your adventuress love from Michigan and – all connected via the telephone linkage – descending together for a fast-paced, animated adventure. This particular option may be available even by the time you are reading this.

"Warp 5, Mr. Sulu."

The real future of GameMaster lies in some truly amazing games that I was able to see demonstrated in their as-yet undeveloped, prototype mode. Even so, I could see how revolutionary the concept is – for GameMaster is about to put you right onboard the starship *Enterprise*.

The game will be based on the fact that most people calling in will be seated at the keyboards of their own computer systems and watching video displays. GameMaster will turn each of those computer stations into a full-fledged battle station aboard a Federation starship.

Communications Officer, Science Officer, Weapons, Navigation and more – all will be represented and able to communicate with each other. The view on your screen might be of Klingon ships if you're at the Weapons console, or computer readouts and blips if you're at Navigation. Each of these battle stations will be fully animated and will look just about as you might expect a real starship to.

Indeed, the screens we saw that demonstrated what the players would be seeing were just about on a par with any of the TV *Star Trek*'s special effects.

Right now the cavern animations and the upcoming *Star Trek* game are all based on the Apple II's graphic capabilities. But, other computers that have excellent graphics (such as the Atari machines) may soon be supported.

More Than Games

GameMaster represents a real breakthrough – and not just in the gaming field. Harlow Stevens Jr., and Sr., and Mrs. Stevens are the close-knit Illinois family who (along with staffers Bob Kniskern and Paul Martin) make up GameMaster.

They are the first small group we know of who have put together an entirely new form of business based on this type of computer communicating. The fact that they chose gaming is not unusual. Many, many advances in the computer field were brought about by people hacking at their favorite (or sometimes most-hated) computer to fashion games to while away their hours with.

Alvin Toffler, in his book *The Third Wave*, predicts many such family units doing business via computer – and calls them "electronic cottages." Here, in GameMaster, we have the first "electronic mansion."

The Bottom Line

GameMaster's hourly charge is $2.50, and they also sell various membership offers. For $75 you get all of the documentation on all the games and a credit towards your first six hours. Or, you can go with just an hour by hour accounting.

You can write to GameMaster at: Box 1483, Evanston, Illinois 60204. Or, if you have a computer, dialing 312-864-0516 will take you to the mansion's front door. And, if you insist on talking to a human with your voice, you can call 312-328-9009.

See you in the *Diplomacy* alcove.

KILLER

Our readers took up the gauntlet of the KILLER challenge, and did so with great success. The problem, as you will recall, was to find the bit of "misapplied physics" that would allow a bomb to be set off at a predictable time in the future . . . by means of the rotation of the earth, and *without* depending upon the sun.

The answer, of course, is the "Foucault pendulum," described below. We received a flood of replies, almost simultaneously. Apparently the added clue – that the sun was not involved – was what did it. Rather than list one winner, we decided to grant equal honors to all those who responded by Sept. 20; between undated letters, illegible postmarks, and the vagaries of the Postal Service coming and going, that seemed fairest.

Those deducing the answer, in alphabetical order, were W.G. Armintrout, Thomas Cornwell, Edmund Hack, Stanley Heckman, Stefan Jones, Jeffrey Katz, Eric B. Paperman, Richard Pichowsky, Lewis Pulsipher, Aaron Silverstein, Douglas Stuart, Dennis Sustare, Andrew Walters, John R. Wickwire, and Robert Woodward. Congratulations, O sneaky killers.

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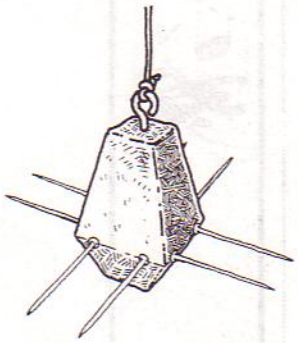
Another method for using the earth's rotation, albeit indirectly, was mentioned by Mr. Pichowsky in his letter, and described in detail by Chris Frazer. "A balloon is secured to a wooden float, which is secured to a pier; above the balloon is a rod with thumbtacks on the bottom. The balloon is set at such a height that it will move up with the tide and strike the tacks at a predetermined time. Alternatively, the tacks could be below the balloon to explode as the tide goes out. The drawbacks: it only works in coastal areas, and you have to lure your victim to the waterfront . . ." To these disadvantages must be added the uncertainties of wind and weather, which could cause such a device to go off early, late, or never. But it's a good idea!



The Foucault Pendulum Revealed

The Foucault pendulum was demonstrated in 1851 by Jean Bernard Leon Foucault, the brilliant French physicist who also invented the gyroscope. Basically, it consists of a long pendulum, freely suspended and bearing a weight heavy enough that it will not be affected by air currents. Such a pendulum, like all pendulums, will swing in a straight line once released. However, the earth continues to rotate *under* the pendulum; thus, when the pendulum has swung for six hours it will appear to have moved 90 degrees in its arc, tracing a north-south line where it originally moved from east to west. See the illustrations below.

To adapt the pendulum for KILLER, it would be necessary to attach several sharp tacks to the swinging weight (one tack will be insufficient, as the weight will spin as it swings). A balloon is then placed at some point along the arc the weight will describe, and the weight set swinging: 45 degrees off for a 3-hour delay, 90 for a six-hour delay, etc.

Properly made, this device is almost foolproof, since it depends on an extremely basic fact of nature. However, its disadvantages are many; for this reason I will be extremely interested to hear about any successful use! The problems to overcome are:

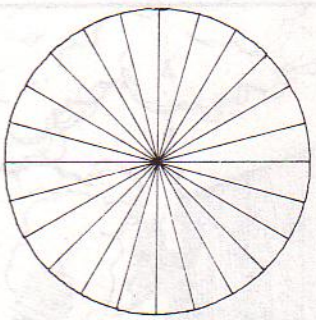
(1) A more obtrusive sort of gadget cannot be imagined. It cannot be hidden, since it is very large; it cannot be disguised easily. The only way I can think of to overcome this would be to "hide it in plain sight," labelling it as a science demonstration of some sort – in which case you would, figuratively speaking, endanger bystanders.

(2) Once recognized it is trivial to defuse.

(3) Because such a device would take a long time to set up and test, a certain inaccuracy in timing would have to be accepted; to have one detonate within five minutes either way of the target time would be very good indeed.

* * *

Next month: Several fiendish new weapons . . . and the sad tale of the nuclear destruction of Tulsa, as performed via KILLER.



If the center of the wheel above represents the place where the pendulum will hang at rest, the border of the wheel shows the limits of its swing. The target balloon should be placed on this rim. The twelve lines show the hourly movement of the pendulum, as do the arrows below – from N-S to E-W in six hours.

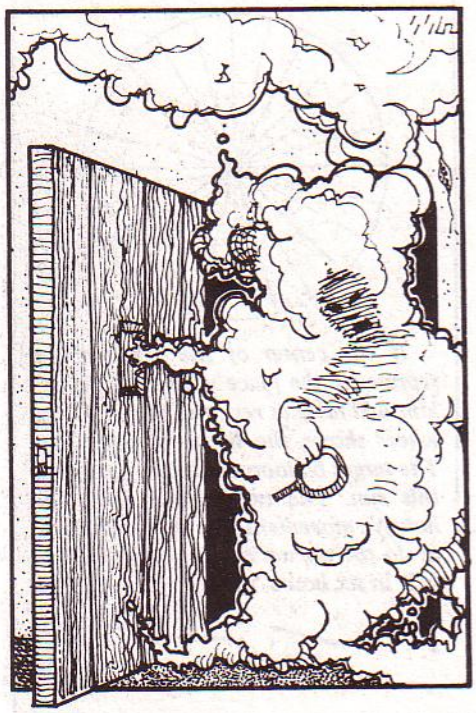
DESIGNER'S NOTES

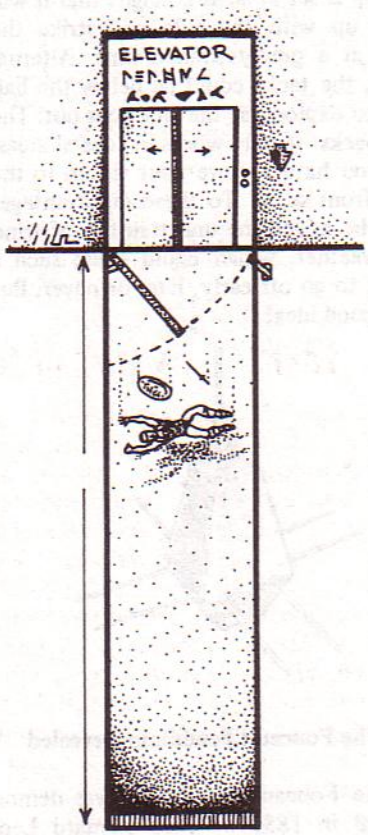
Grimtooth's Traps

by Paul O'Connor

In issue number six of *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Flying Buffalo first announced plans to produce what eventually was to become GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS. The announcement solicited trap submissions from the SA readership. Everyone that had a trap printed would receive a copy of the manual when it was published. That was in the Spring of 1980.

In March of 1981, I was presented with a file marked simply "The Great Book of Traps." Enclosed therein were approximately fifty traps of all types, ranging in quality from the magnificently clever to the abysmally ridiculous. Most of the traps included damage and saving roll statistics for *Tunnels and Trolls*, but a number of the submissions were presented in terms that would only be useful for someone playing *D&D, The Fantasy Trip*, and even *Traveller*! It was a mess.





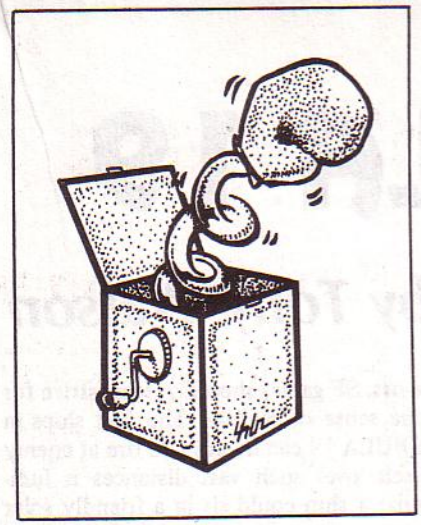
I decided that I needed a gimmick, something that would give an overall sense of cohesiveness to the project. I began toying with the idea of writing a narrator into the book, a character like your typical late-night horror movie host, through whom I could introduce and describe each trap. The idea seemed flexible and easy to work with, and the more I thought about it, the more I liked it.

I think it was Pat Mueller that first suggested I use Grimtooth the Troll as my alter-ego for TRAPS. Grimtooth was developed for a series of comics in *Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Liz Danforth and Ugly John Carver. The comic lasted only one issue, but Grimtooth managed to survive somehow, and has gone on to appear in most every issue of SA since – usually engaged in such tasks as pulling the wings off fairies or inflating hobbits with helium so they'd float like balloons. Grimtooth seemed like my kind of guy, and was the perfect choice for the narrator of what quickly became titled GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS.

My next problem was the material I had to work with. In reading over the traps that had been submitted, I quickly learned that what one dungeonmaster considers certain death is often a cake walk in the eyes of another. How on earth was I to collate what amounted to the opinions of twenty-odd contributors on the nature of trap design and theory into one consistent and useable book?

I immediately hit upon the idea of making GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS compatible with all fantasy role playing systems. No designer can possibly hope to write a manual that will please all the players of all games equally and still include system-specific statistics. There are as many different ways to define a trap as there are game systems. Additionally, the severity of a trap can vary even within the bounds of a single game. A trap as simple as a pit full of spikes might prove relatively easy to avoid if encountered on the first level of a dungeon, but the same trap would almost certainly provide a considerably greater obstacle when found in the deeper, more dangerous recesses of the same complex. I was afraid that if I provided specific statistics for each of the fantasy role playing systems, GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS would develop into a number-heavy mass of artificial restrictions. As I've always considered such products to be counterproductive, not to mention a crashing bore, such an approach was the last thing in the world I wanted to do with TRAPS.

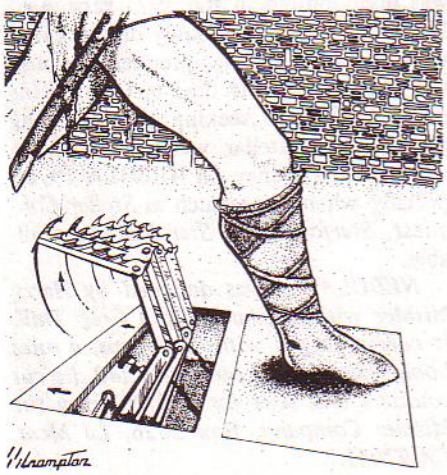
Thus, the non-system specific nature of GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS. By going with such a format, I was also able to attempt to do something about a pet peeve of mine: the so-called "universal fantasy supplement." All too often had I bought a fantasy supplement advertised for use with any role playing system, only to find that it was suitable for use only with one specific set of rules, and not the ones that I was using. I decided that GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS would be *truly* universal, devoid of any system bias whatsoever. Perhaps I could start a trend, and save oth-



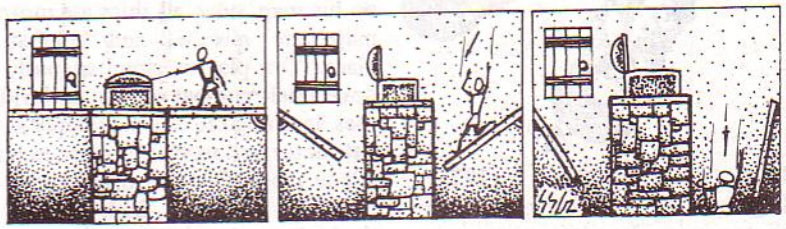
er gamers from buying useless material.

I was then faced with the task of rewriting each of the trap submissions so as to remove any game mechanics, as well as to insert Grimtooth's personal touch. In the process of doing so, many of the traps were completely overhauled, with little more than the original concept of the trap surviving the process. Still, in every instance the original contributor of the trap was given credit for the design, even if the final product bore little resemblance to the original submissions.

During this time I worked closely with the project's illustrator, Steve Crompton. Steve provided creative input on a great number of the traps, and his contributions to the project extend well beyond his artistic ones. Steve and I worked together by discussing the general nature of a given trap as the original designer conceived it. When we had a good idea of how we wanted the trap to work, Steve would do an illustration, working from the contributor's diagrams (if any). After a few more meetings, Steve would have a completed drawing, around which I could write my description of the trap. A number of the traps profited greatly from Steve's input. An odd number of heads is indeed better than one, especially if the heads involved are odd to begin with.



It was also during this period that I realized that I didn't have nearly as many traps as I would have liked. I started up a campaign to solicit from the local FRP gamers, but didn't receive much useable material. Mike Stackpole and I resorted to "think tank" for traps, where the two of us would sit around and brainstorm out a bunch of different trap designs. Quite a few interesting devices developed from these frenzied sessions. Much of the credit for these traps must go to Mike – as I usually had my hands full with preparing the overall manuscript, I really didn't have much time to develop fresh designs. This freed Mike to work on his own, a situation which didn't bother him in the least. Mike was always there with a wealth of material, usually delivered with a devious giggle and a wild-eyed look of lunacy into my greedy hands. Mike is due much of the credit for the way TRAPS turned out. Without him, the finished product would have been very different.

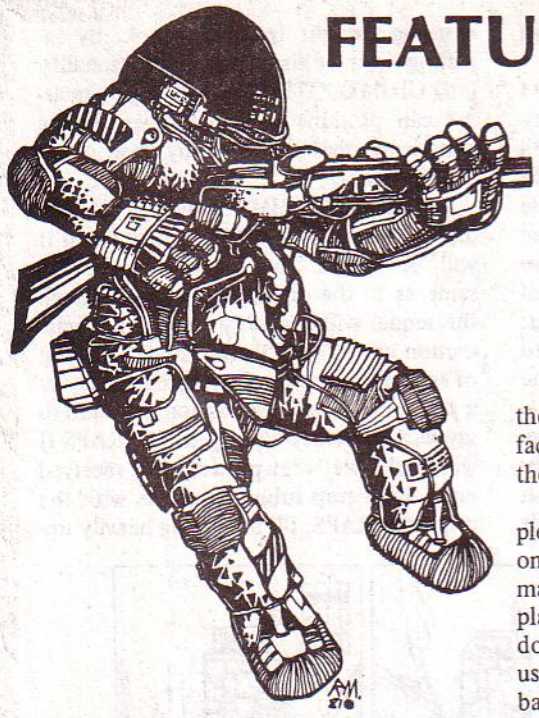


The response from the gaming world to TRAPS has been almost uniformly positive. The only criticism that TRAPS seems to consistently draw is that the traps seem too tough, providing little or no chance for delvers caught in them to escape. In many ways, this may be true; a great number are intended to be killers, and are very hard to avoid. Despite this, however, I think that many people are overreacting. Part of the reason for making TRAPS as loose as it is was to give gamemasters a measure of leeway in determining how rough to make a particular trap. As noted at the beginning of TRAPS, just the slightest bit of modification to a trap can reduce or increase its deadliness. Instead of dropping a load of boiling oil on a character, you can easily substitute a net. Instead of loading a poisoned arrow into that cranequin hidden in the chest, you can insert a cream pie. My advice for the people who feel that the traps in GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS are too tough is to modify them to suit their own needs. GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS was written with this sort of thing in mind, and it certainly won't collapse if someone toys with it a little (or a lot). In fact, I rather hope that people will take to tinkering with TRAPS as a matter of course, rather than simply working straight from the book. By injecting a bit of his or her own personality into GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS, a gamemaster can produce an imaginative playing experience that the book by itself could never present.

A sequel to GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS is in the works, but I have no idea when it will be ready. The format will be the same as in the original TRAPS, although the sequel will probably contain a special section on various "theme traps:" a group of several traps that fit together nicely in a particular locale or situation. It's hard to say with certainty exactly what TRAPS II will look like – at present, I've received only three trap submissions. As with the original TRAPS, I'll be relying heavily upon independent contributors to fill the book. Anyone interested in doing so is more than welcome to contribute to TRAPS II.

Exactly how well-received GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS will prove to be in the long run remains to be seen. As long as the demand keeps up, Flying Buffalo will probably continue to produce books in the TRAPS series. With any luck, I'll be able to work on each and every one. The task of editing something like TRAPS may be a trying one at times, but when you're dealing with the demented and devious minds of fantasy gamers, the job's never dull.

FEATURED REVIEW:



NEBULA 19

by Tony Watson

NEBULA 19 first appeared in 1971, when SF gaming was a poor relation to historical gaming. The game was not widely distributed, and many of the copies that are still around are probably languishing on their owners' shelves, long forgotten. For its time, the original NEBULA 19 was not a bad game, but times changes, and the re-release of NEBULA 19 in an upgraded physical format only emphasizes how far SF gaming has come.

Interstellar war is the subject of NEBULA 19; the two identical 19" by 24" maps depict a starcluster of fifteen stars and seven large nebulae. The maps are quite attractive in appearance, using the equivalent of a square grid. Number coordinates are used along each side and since the game strives to depict three dimensional space, the stars and clouds are given height coordinates. To handle the depth dimension for ships, half the counters in the games are informational and have numbers for tagging distance in the third dimension.

NEBULA 19 is basically a game of spaceships; economics and politics are relegated to very minor roles. Each of the large (5/8") counters represent one spaceship. The counters show only a ship silhouette and its name. The various systems that compose each ship are listed on two double-sided cards. These cards list the ships by class and detail all specifications. In the basic game, these are limited to speed in squares and six combat related functions. Each ship has an energizer, or attack factor and a shield, or defense factor. These systems are powered by cells, each use of the component using up one cell. A range in squares is listed for the energizer. Ships also have overload factors which denote the number of hits they can withstand before destruction.

The game mechanics are relatively simple. Each player moves his ships secretly on his map; once all ships are moved, the maps are revealed and combat takes place. The players simultaneously write down their combat orders; each ship that uses an energizer cell may apply its combat factor against one or more enemy vessels in range. Once all orders are written, they are revealed. Each time a ship's shield factor is matched, it loses one overload factor, and once all overload factors are used up the ship is destroyed. Ships can choose not to power their shields, but since ships without shields are quickly destroyed, this is tantamount to suicide.

The standard game offers a number of new ship components, including tracking rules which allow the exact details of a ship to be revealed only after a successful probe, repair abilities and transporter capacity, which is used, like its name sake from the *Star Trek* series, to beam items like fighters, power cells or even small ships around the map. Ships can be equipped with hyperdrive units (apparently, normal movement entails the use of some other form of trans-light drive) which allows for truly secret movement. Some ships are equipped with a "mine factor," an ability to attack any ships in its blast radius via self destruction.

The advanced game introduces no new ship systems, but mainly concentrates on rules for player designed ships. Where the basic and standard games provide the players with ready made fleets, the advanced game allows players to design ships as they see fit, balancing off various systems and paying for the ships from a pool of cost points. The design rules are interesting and perhaps the most intelligent feature in the game.

NEBULA 19 has a number of flaws. While the physical components have been upgraded considerably, the designer did not take advantage of the intervening years to improve the game itself. It is essentially the same game offered in 1971. Put simply, NEBULA 19 is not state-of-the-art. SF games should at least strive for some sense of realism. The fact ships in NEBULA 19 can detect and fire at enemy vessels over such vast distances is ludicrous; a ship could sit in a friendly solar system and attack other ships halfway to the next system! The map is constructed for movement and combat in three dimensions, but no diagonal counting for either movement nor determining range is allowed. Thus nearly every move or fire includes at least one right angle turn.

The combat system is stagnant and predictable. The removal of the element of chance will please the player who hates bad die rolls, but it makes for a dull game. Presumably, the guessing game as to which ships will expend power cells to use energizers and shields will add a bit of uncertainty to combat. Once players learn the tactic of insuring that each enemy ship is attacked, even if only with a few left over attack points, it becomes suicide not to use shields every turn, and battle degenerates into a mathematical exercise.

A fair amount of effort has gone into creating a SF flavor in the game. Background "historical" material has been provided, as well as detailed orders of battle giving comments on the ship classes and how they performed in battle. Ship silhouettes and individualized names add to the feeling. All these aspects are laudable, but one might wish this effort had gone into improving the game's design. I was disappointed in the 1971 version of NEBULA 19 and am doubly disappointed with the new edition, precisely because the designer had the time to improve his product. Gamers seeking an interesting game of interstellar warfare would be wasting their money on NEBULA 19, especially when games such as *Stellar Conquest*, *Starforce* and *Star Fall* are available.

NEBULA 19 was designed by Harry Mishler with assistance from Greg Thill. It comes bagged with two maps, a rules book, five playaid cards and 240 die cut counters and sells for $11.00 from the Mishler Company, Box 2626, La Mesa, CA 92041.

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274-0926

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Phoenix, Az. 85023
866-1984

Things For Tinkers
4500 E. Speedway #36
Tucson, Az. 85716
326-7679

Wargames West
3422 Central South East
Albuquerque, N.M. 87106
265-6100

M & M Coin
211 W. 3rd.
Roswell, N.M. 88201
622-4651

The Game Store
249 N. Palm Canyon Dr.
Palm Springs, Ca. 92262
325-7545

Games & Things
1128 Standford Shopping Center
Palo Alto, Ca. 94304
528-4331

Games & Things
2413 Larkspur Landing Cr.
Larkspur, Ca. 94939
461-9696

The Dragon's Den
5819 Stockton Blvd.
Sacramento, Ca. 98524
452-6647

Heritage Book Store
Renton Shopping Center
Renton, Wash. 98055
271-1776

Fantasy Forest
384 Queen St. 2nd. Floor
Freidricton, N.B.
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_____

WRITER'S GUIDE

***THE SPACE GAMER* accepts articles and art from its readers. All material must be oriented toward science fiction or fantasy gaming.**

PAYMENT: TSG pays one cent a word for most copy. (That works out to 40 cents per column inch of 10 pt. type, or 60 cents per inch of 8 pt. type.) If an article must be extensively rewritten, it will be published under both bylines. The original author will be paid ¾ cent a word; the rewrite man will be paid ½ cent a word. Professional fiction pays 3 cents a word. Capsule reviews pay a flat $5.00.

Contributors may wish to apply payment to their subscriptions. Upon request, the note "CREDIT" will become part of the contributor's file, and he will receive subscription credit instead of cash payment. Credit is applied at the rate of $1.75/issue, rounded up in the contributor's favor.

In all cases, TSG gives a minimum payment or credit of $5.00 per contributor per issue. (This simplifies our bookkeeping.)

SUBJECT MATTER: A look at our back issues will give you an idea of the kind of material we regularly print. Specifically:

Scenarios and variants – An article on a scenario or variation for a popular game will always be carefully considered. The better-known the game, the more likely we are to print a scenario or variant. Submissions should be playtested by the author; they will also be playtested by the staff.

Strategy articles – If you think you consistently win a popular game, and are willing to share your secrets, go ahead! We never have enough strategy articles.

Role-playing game material – Be original; don't give us another rehash of Tolkien or *Star Wars*. Readers like play hints, new creatures and artifacts, adventure modules and programmed adventures. Preference is given to the more popular games, and to material which can be used with more than one game. Sometimes TSG will devote the center of the magazine to a pull-out supplement. These can run up to 8,000 words.

Fiction – TSG is a game magazine, not a fiction magazine. However, we sometimes publish SF and fantasy short stories. Submissions should be accompanied by game scenarios or variants. The staff may be able to improvise a game article to go with a story, but ungameable fiction will be returned.

Humor – Keep it short.

Deus Ex Machina – We run articles on computer gaming under this title. User-oriented articles are welcome. Programmer-oriented articles must be game-related. *Short* program listings are also welcome.

Designer's Notes – TSG definitely solicits designer's articles on newly-released games!

Retrospect – Sometimes we run designer's articles on old hobby favorites. These tell how the game has developed over the years, and what expansion is planned.

Company Reports – By invitation only – but inquire! Publishers are welcome to write general articles on gaming.

PBM Update – Open to professional PBM game moderators, as described in each issue of TSG.

Other Stuff – TSG sometimes runs commentaries and survey articles. We do not regularly run, but do not rule out, fact articles. Specifically, we do *not* want to see material on historical gaming, miniatures for display, game psychology, movies or non-game books. There is a strong editorial bias against poetry, songs, and articles which consist solely of charts and tables.

RIGHTS: Unless otherwise specified, TSG buys all published material as "work for hire," that is, we buy all rights. From professional authors of fiction, we can buy first North American serial rights. Inquire with submission.

SPECIFICATIONS: All written submissions should be typed, double spaced, on white, letter-sized paper. Do not write on the back. The first page should include your name and address, and give an approximate word count. Each page should be numbered, and include the author's name. Each submission must include a self-addressed envelope with return postage.

If your article requires illustrations, draw them as well as you can. Our staff artist will re-render them if necessary. Fiction does not usually require illustrations by the author, but if you are an artist as well as an author, go ahead.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: We try to acknowledge submissions within 30 days of receipt. If you have not gotten an acknowledgement within 90 days, send us a query. We do not usually acknowledge press releases, games sent for review, calendar items, PBM Updates or letters to the editor.

Capsule Reviews

Most of the reviews we print will be "capsule" reviews – 400 words or less. We pay $5 for each capsule review accepted. We want to run a review for *every* new SF or fantasy game or supplement.

Each capsule review should be five paragraphs long and contain:

(1) Basic information. Present these facts, in this order: NAME OF GAME (Publisher); price. Designer. (If applicable: "Supplement to ---," "Companion to ---," or similar note.) Format: list of components, with sizes of maps and rulebooks, number of counters, etc. Number of players; playing time. Publication date.

(2) General description of the game: background, the sides, course of play, special features, etc.

(3) Strong points. Discuss what is good about the game; in every game, there IS something worthwhile. "Fun" is a useless adjective. Be specific.

(4) Weak points. Every game has its problems, too. If the only faults you can find are minor ones, say so. If the game is fatally flawed, come right out and SAY SO. If you can phrase your criticisms as suggestions for improvement, do so.

(5) Summation. Your overall opinion of the game. Who should and should not buy it, and why. Is the game worth its price?

All reviews must be signed; the reviewer's name *will* be printed. No game may be reviewed by its designer, by a playtester, or by an employee of the publisher. (Designer's articles are welcome, but must be billed as such!) Final note: If you can write a complete review in less than the full 400 words, by all means do so.

This review format is designed to encourage fairness and to give the reader enough information to let him decide whether he wants to buy that game. Keep that in mind when you write. This is a short review, *not* a complete analysis. For those who want to write longer reviews, each issue will have one or two –

Featured Reviews

These will be game reviews 1,000 to 2,000 words long. They should contain *all the above information,* plus whatever else the reviewer wants to say. They may be written in any format. A featured review may cover either a new game or one that has been on the market for some time. If TSG has not already printed a capsule review, write one and submit it at the same time. We may even use both.

ARTIST'S GUIDE

PAYMENT: TSG pays on publication. Payment for cover art starts at $60 and goes up, depending on quality of the work. Interior (b&w) art earns the artist a flat $1 per column inch – thus, a half-page illustration would pay $15. If your check would come to less than $5, we will round it up to $5, as for writers.

SUBJECTS: Again – all art should be oriented toward fantasy, science fiction, and/or gaming. Either a serious or humorous approach is acceptable – whatever fits your style. Certain subjects have been overdone. Don't send us a barbarian hero with a clinging maiden at his feet; we have lots already.

Cover art – Must be full-color, finely detailed paintings. Artists must use a vertical format, leaving room for the TSG logo and list of contents. Look at our past covers.

Interior art – At present we need black-and-white material only for interior illos. Line art reproduces much better than water-color or other material requiring screening. Work to exact size where possible: 1, 2, or 3-column width. NOTE: We use many more small pictures than we do large ones. If you keep your subject general, you increase the odds that it will fit an article or review. We will not run art unrelated to the material it accompanies.

Cartoons – Cartoons are bought at the normal b&w rate. Exception: One cartoon per issue appears on the mailer cover. If a cartoon is selected for this position, the artist receives a flat $10.00. Payment for continuing strips is subject to negotiation.

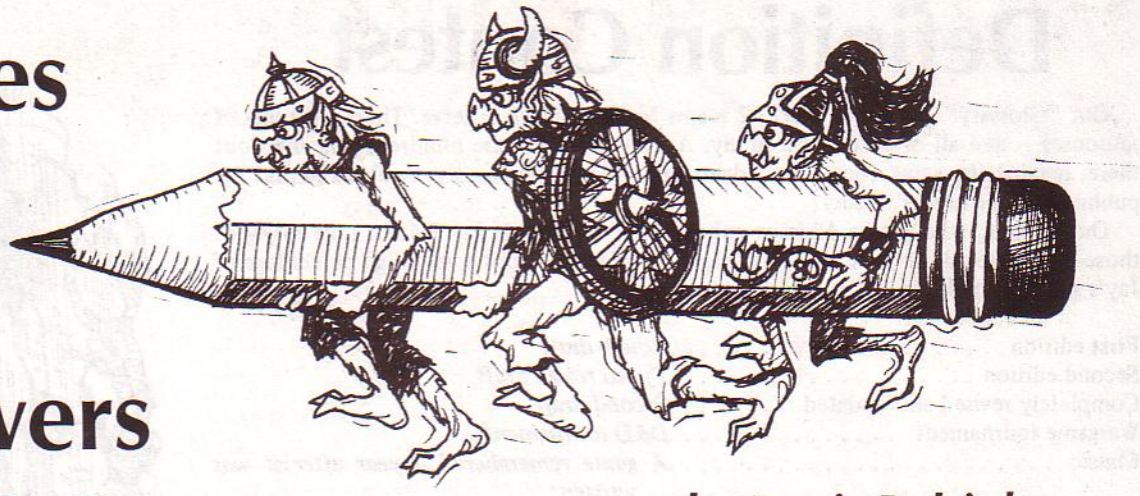
RIGHTS: TSG purchases the original artwork and all rights unless initially specified and agreed otherwise. We will always return cover art if the artist specifies this at time of sale, but payment is adjusted downward accordingly. TSG expressly authorizes artists to reprint their own work for purposes of self-promotion.

SPECIFICATIONS: Cover art may be executed in oils, acrylics, water color – whatever you like. Work on a light, flexible board if at all possible. Try not to send originals larger than 17" x 22". Actual size is quite acceptable.

Interior art must be executed in black ink (preferably India ink) on white paper. Again – work to actual size where possible. We prefer to paste up the original if we can; reproduction is better that way. DO NOT send originals larger than 8½" x 14". Art should always be mailed flat – never rolled.

RETURN OF UNUSED MATERIAL: We will return all art we reject, or any piece we do not print within a year – IF the artist sends a stamped, self-addressed envelope with his original submission. If we do not receive an SASE, we will hold the rejected art for a month or so and then discard it.

Notes for Reviewers



by Lewis Pulsipher

As a writer of some 50 to 100 game reviews I'd like to share some thoughts with those who are thinking of taking up this thankless task. When you write a review you don't just sit down and say whatever comes into your head. There's a method to it, and a way of conveying information to the reader in a manner which will help him decide whether to buy the game.

First think about *who* you're writing the review for – who are the readers? A review of a fantasy role-playing game (FRPG), say, could be written from several different angles, depending on what magazine it was written for. In a fantasy/science fiction gaming magazine, for example, the author would draw comparisons with other FRPG familiar to the readers. But *Different Worlds* readers, say, are more likely to be familiar with *Runequest*, while *Dragon* readers probably know *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* best. If it is written for a science fiction fanzine the author will devote more space to explaining the mechanics and basic ideas of fantasy role-playing. If the review is written for a general wargames magazine the author may talk about how "realistic" the game is, and how adaptable it is to single-session games as opposed to multi-session campaigns. If it is written for a general games magazine the role-playing technique must be explained, and complexity and ease of understanding the rules will be important topics. Ask yourself what the reader will want to learn from your review, and what he's likely to know already, *before* you start to write.

What is the purpose of the review? A proper review addresses three questions: what the designer was trying to accomplish, how well he succeeded, and whether his goal was worth pursuing. The first question is pretty objective, and will be reasonably obvious for those games which include designers notes. The second question is a combination of the objective and subjective. The more games you know, and the more often you play the game you're reviewing, the better you can say how well this particular game accomplishes its goals.

The third question is largely subjective, a matter of personal opinion. It is the author's reaction to the game, often coming down to whether he liked it or not, period. Some writers would say that this reaction has no place in a review; after all, if you've stated clearly what the designer was trying to do, the reader can decide for himself whether it was worth doing. Unfortunately, many so-called reviews are merely disguised reactions, answering only this third question. They tell the reader very little, unless he is familiar with the author's tastes. But the latter is never true when you are just starting to write reviews; in any case, you should avoid the reaction-only review regardless of an extreme reaction: someone reviews *The Fantasy Trip* and ends by saying "This is a rotten game; it's stupid for anyone to try to improve upon, or offer an alternative to, *Dungeons and Dragons* (or *Runequest*, or whatever FRPG the author thinks is the be-all and end-all). He's condemned TFT because he dislikes the goal, not because it's a good or bad game.

You have a responsibility to both readers and designers. It is as wrong to recommend every game you review as to pan every one. If you are always complimentary then your readers lose an important guide to whether they should buy the game, your evaluation of its quality. On the other hand, if you condemn a game without properly playing it you may be costing someone a lot of money (and harming reputations) because you're lazy. The most frequent offense in this regard is the "reviewer" who doesn't play the game. There are others who read the rules once rapidly and then play their personal, confused impression of the rules rather than the game as it was meant to be played. Of course, if the rules are really unclear or poorly written you must say so, for nothing else so surely destroys the usefulness of a game. But be sure it's the rules, not your incompetent reading, that causes the difficulties. A rules writer, after all, must assume a certain level of competence of the reader or he would be writing "Dick and Jane" books for children. Apply professional standards; small manufacturers may skimp on physical quality, but no one can be excused for publishing a bad game, whatever its appearance.

I am often annoyed by the emphasis some reviewers place on physical quality. There is sometimes an implied attitude that if the game looks nice and feels nice it doesn't matter if it isn't very good to play. This attitude may derive from a buried assumption that no one will play a game more than a few times regardless of how good it is. I've always assumed that a good game was one you could play again and again, and I wrote reviews with that in mind: if the game wasn't good, nice physical components made no difference. The safest approach is to describe the physical components and let the reader decide how important this is.

When I prepared a long review I often wrote to the designer of the game to ask questions about his objectives, about the design process, about changes the manufacturer might have made, and about rule ambiguities. It's not always practical to do this for short reviews, but it can improve a feature review immensely.

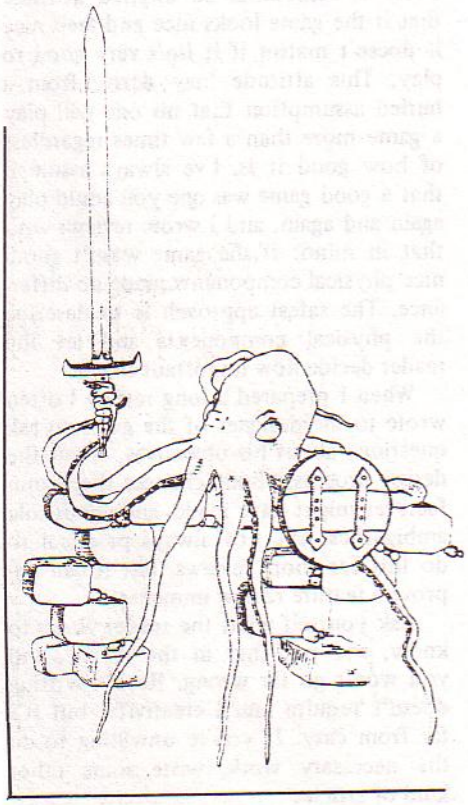
Ask yourself what the reader wants to know, and put that in the review, and you won't go far wrong. Review-writing doesn't require much creativity, but it's far from easy. If you're unwilling to do the necessary work, write some other kind of article.

Definition Contest

Our "Glossary" contest in TSG 42 seems to have struck a nerve. There were lots of responses – and all of them were funny. Apparently there are hundreds of gamers out there, reading the game companies' advertising and laughing madly. Could it be that the public is getting harder to fool?

Our winner, who gets a 12-issue subscription to TSG, is Jay Rudin. Like many of those who entered, he sent in several pages of material – but a very high percentage of Jay's stuff was right on target, and *evil.*

First edition	*Rough draft*
Second edition	*Typed rough draft*
Completely revised and updated	*Second draft*
Wargame tournament	*D&D tournament*
Classic	*A game remembered a year after it was written*
Minor classic	*Six months?*
Playability	*A magical word of Power invoked to avoid the necessity of research*
Historically accurate	*A magical word of Power invoked to avoid the necessity of playtesting*
Play by mail	*A unique system of play enabling the player to completely forget the game between each move*
Play by mail computer game	*A system which utilizes a machine which can think in microseconds to transform an afternoon-long game into a year-long game*
Original collector's edition	*A special reprint edition, enabling a gamer to buy an unorganized, unplayable, ungrammatical, badly spelled, illiterate mess long after these problems have been fixed*
"You don't revise a classic"	*No, we're not gonna fix the mistakes*
Based on the famous book	*The names on the counters are the same as those in the book*



Second place, good for 6 issues, goes to David Edelstein:

Not just a cheap copy of *Dungeons & Dragons*	*It's an expensive copy of D&D*
Over 100 monsters!	*Red dragon, white dragon, silver dragon, purple dragon, aquamarine dragon . . .*
Can be played as a single adventure or as an ongoing campaign	*You can make up a new character every time you play or use the same one over and over*
15 different character classes	*Including classes such as Shoe Shiner, Street Sweeper and Accountant*
If your local hobby store doesn't carry it, then send us his address so we can fill him in and add his name to our mailing list	*You get to be our salesman*
Send in for our free catalog	*Now you'll be getting junk mail from us every ten days*
Complete this survey and send it in	*If you won't ask for the catalog, we'll get your address this way*
Stop by at the next GenCon and see us at booth 999	*We have a whole stack of catalogs waiting for you*
The Original Mices & Maces set	*The rough drafts*
If you win this contest, you will get a free 12-month subscription to . . .	*And no matter who wins we get to add several thousand names to our mailing list*

It sounds like David has been at some of the staff meetings around here . . .

We could have filled several pages with the runners-up. A few of the best:

Game of exploration . . . . . *More time will be spent searching through the rule book than playing the game*
Game of diplomacy . . . . . *More time will be spent convincing your friends that your rule interpretations are correct than playing the game*
Game of combat . . . . . *More time will be spent arguing and fighting about unclear rules than playing the game*

—Bob Dahla

* * *

Like nothing any gamer has seen before! . . *Not playtested*

—Stefan Jones

* * *

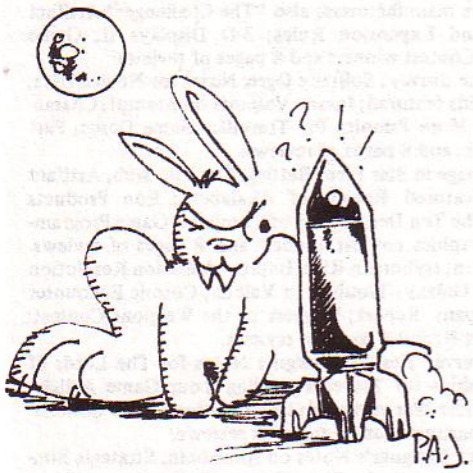
Soon to be released . . . . . *Next year?*
Official errata . . . . . *2nd half of the rules*
By popular demand . . . . . *By our creditors' demand*
Special offer . . . . . *We couldn't give this one away*

—Louis Soldano

CONTEST

On page 40, you will find a new feature – "Murphy's Rules," a collection of the strangest aberrations ever to appear in a game box. This month's contest is to send us more items like those shown. Judging will be on the basis of accuracy, irony and humor.

All entries will become the property of the magazine. The winner will receive a 12-issue subscription; second place will win a 6-issue subscription. All winners and runners up will be credited in Murphy's Rules. (In the event of duplication, only the first entry will be credited.) We reserve the right to award fewer prizes if no entries of publishable quality are received. All entries must be postmarked no later than November 30, 1981.



Extensive new tables . . . . . *Expensive new tables*
NEW . . . . . *New name*

—Michael T. Moore

* * *

Widely acclaimed . . . . . *Widely advertised*
Extensively blindtested . . . . . *The playtesters were blind*
Diceless combat resolution system . . . . . *Slightly modified Rock-Scissors-Paper*

—Rob Heinsoo

* * *

Hottest game on the market . . . . . *Everyone is burning his copy*

—Ernest Johnson

Level of complexity: easy . . . . . *Moderate*
Level of complexity: moderate . . . . . *Hard*
Level of complexity: hard . . . . . *Too complicated to play even the basic game*
10 years in the making! . . . . . *Someone thought of the idea ten years ago and now it's a game*

—Stephen Melisi

* * *

Subscriber's bonus . . . . . *No one will buy them so we're giving them to you*
Create your own scenarios . . . . . *We couldn't think of any ourselves*

—Glenn Mai

* * *

Flexible rules system . . . . . *Will be interpreted differently by everyone who reads them*
Perfect for solitaire play . . . . . *if you're schizophrenic!*

—Randy Divinski

PROTECTIVE MAILING COVER . . . . . *The only part of the magazine not mutilated by the Post Office*

—Michael Vande Bunt

* * *

Also available for this game . . . . . *Impossible to play the game without it.*
Coming soon . . . . . *We got a name, now all we need are some rules*

—Michael J. Maresea

* * *

Unique method of resolving combat . . . . . *No one else would use it*
Play by mail . . . . . *Wait by mail*
Quick turn-around . . . . . *Pony Express would have been quicker*
You can't afford to miss this game . . . . . *We can't afford to miss this sale*
Limited time offer . . . . . *Good only as long as orders keep coming in*
Basic rules book . . . . . *You'd better plan on buying our advanced rules, too*

—Ron Peetz

TSG BACK ISSUES

No. 15. Wizard and Olympica designer intros; Robotics in Traveller; Floating Hulks; Ogre Update; Orcs and their Weapons; computer gaming.

No. 16. WarpWar article; Classics Simulated in Melee; Alpha Omega; Demons! (Moties in Melee); 1977 game survey results – and a LOT of reviews.

No. 17. GEV designer's intro; strategy for Chitin: I; variants for Imperium, Melee, and a combination Ogre/Rivets variant; WarpWar fiction.

No. 18. IceWar designer's intro; variant scenarios for Invasion: America and War of the Ring; additional equipment for Traveller; mounted Melee; "Referee, Declare Thyself!" (role-playing GM technique).

No. 19. POND WAR; variant units and scenarios for GEV; combining Imperium and WarpWar; Battlefleet Mars variant; reviews of Swords & Sorcery, Runequest, and Raumkrieg; MicroGame design article.

No. 20. Olympica tactics; Psionics in Traveller; TARTARS & MARTYRS; Reality in Melee; designer's optional rules for Ice War; designer's article on Starships & Spacemen; "Rip-Off Blues" (wargaming frauds).

No. 21. Interview with Dave Arneson; running a MicroGame tournament; tactics for Ogre and GEV; spaceship miniatures; Black Hole variant rules, putting the Deryni into Melee; more reviews.

No. 22. Ice War tactics; Black Hole physics; PARTY BRAWL; 1978 SF/fantasy game survey results; Fantasy Trip short story.

No. 23. Invasion of the Air Eaters designer's article; Ogre meets Ice War; Sticks & Stones expansion; Vikings and Valde in The Fantasy Trip.

No. 24. Black Hole designer's intro; "The Psychology of Wargaming"; Naval Melee; "The Four-Howitzer Defense in Ogre;" variants for Chitin: I, The Creature that Ate Sheboygan, and John Carter of Mars.

No. 25. Stellar Conquest issue . . . designer's article, tournament tactics, and variant scenarios; also – strategy in Rivets; benefit-cost analysis for Ice War; "Everyday Life in The Fantasy Trip."

No. 26. Oneworld designer's intro; tactics in GEV; variations on Wizard; computers in wargaming; Life-sized Melee; and a variant that puts human forces into Rivets.

No. 27. Hot Spot's designer's intro; Time Travel; Nuke the Air Eaters (gaming atomic war); Weapons for Hobbits in TFT; Muskets in TFT; Game Design Part 1; 5 pages of game reviews.

No. 28. 1979 Game Survey results; Overmen in TFT; A Guide to SF/Fantasy Game Publishers; Task Force Games report; Writers' and Artists' guides; 7 pages of reviews; Game Design Part 2; Deus Ex Machina.

No. 29. Fantasy Trip designer's intro; Painting Fantasy Miniatures; Fantasy and SF game magazines surveyed; Game Design Part 3; more Deus Ex Machina; 7 pages of reviews.

No. 30. KUNG FU 2100; Painting Fantasy Miniatures Part II; Index to Game Articles; Game Design Part 4; Programmable Calculators; 10 pages of reviews.

No. 31. "Sam Beowulf"; 1980 Game Software survey; Game Design Part 5; Random Maze Generation; 9 pages of reviews.

No. 32. Traveller issue: Alternate Character Types, reviews of play aids, scenarios, and variants; also Game Design Part 6; Deus Ex Machina; "Minus Two Reaction;" software survey update; Yaquinto Games report; 9 pages of reviews.

No. 33. Play-by-mail issue: Feature reviews of four PBM games, a Warp War Campaign, Survey of PBM companies; also, Contest Report; Company Report from Schubel and Son; "End Game;" GEV scenario; Game Design Part 7; Deus Ex Machina; The Good Guys, Part I; and 10 pages of reviews.

No. 34. Miniatures issue: Cardboard Heroes Designer's Notes, LOTR Miniatures, Painting Fantasy Miniatures Advanced Techniques, Survey of miniatures manufacturers; also "The Challenge;" Artifact Designer's Notes and Expansion Rules; 3-D Displays II; Game Design Part 8; Wish Contest winner; and 8 pages of reviews.

No. 35. The 1980 Game Survey; Solitaire Ogre; Notes for Novice DMs; The War of the Worlds featured; Insane Variants on Stomp!; Character Contest results; More Psionics for Traveller; Game Design Part IX; Deus Ex Machina; and 9 pages of reviews.

No. 36. Computing damage in Star Fleet Battles; The Fire Web, Artifact for Traveller; a Featured Review of Akalabeth; Eon Products Company Report; The Ten Deadly Sins of Computer Game Programming; Computer Graphics contest winner; and 8 pages of reviews.

No. 37. Gaming the Alien; Hyborean Risk; Improved Mission Resolution for Freedom in the Galaxy; Troubles in Valetia; Cosmic Encounter Review; FGU Company Report; Winners of the Weapons Contest; Ten Deadly Sins Part II; and 6 pages of reviews.

No. 38. 1980 Game Survey Results; Designer Notes for The Lords of UnderEarth; Used ships for Traveller; Selling Your Game Article; Expert D&D and Time War reviewed; Combination Game Contest; The Complaints Department; and 7 pages of reviews.

No. 39. Computer issue: Designer's Notes on Akalabeth, Strategic Simulations Report, Strategy in the Warp Factor, Computers to Go, a TRS-80 Briefing, An update on the gaming world; also Rumor Reliability in Traveller; Scenario for Triplanetary; Magic contest results; Simple Traps; and 8 pages of reviews.

No. 40. Traveller issue: Planet of Adventure: Tschai, a new Traveller combat system, Non-Human Races contest winners, Aboard the Leviathan; also Cumulative Index to Game Articles; Game Design: RPGs; Deus Ex Machina; and 6 pages of reviews.

No. 41. D&D issue: Tips for Thieves, Alternate Races for D&D, DM Don'ts, (Your Name) and the Holy Grail; also Tips for TFT Players; more Non-humans contest winners; Game Design (last of the series); Deus Ex Machina; and 9 pages of reviews.

No. 42. Star Trek issue: Designer's Notes, Official Errata, Star Fleet Battle Manual reviewed, programming dialog in Trek computer games; also Metamorphosis Alpha Notebook; glossary of game terms – and what they really mean; combined arms in D&D; more non-human races; GEV contest winners; and 8 pages of reviews.

No. 43. Origins Report; Expanded Combat for Traveller; Designer's Notes for Swordthrust; Diplomacy Variants; More Killer; "Sword's Man" by Timothy Zahn; Deus Ex Machina; and 9 pages of reviews.

No. 44. Special feature: AFVs in Traveller; Beware the Uranium Dragon; Fantasy Demography; another scenario for Killer; Featured review of Universe; Deus Ex Machina; and 8 pages of reviews.

Send $2.50 per copy, plus 50 cents per order for postage and handling, to TSG, Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760.

If you are a TSG subscriber, you can get discounts on back issues. Use the order form on the mailer cover of your subscription copy.

CAR WARS

Designer's Notes by Chad Irby

In August of 1980, I had a flash of inspiration. It was almost a *crash* of inspiration . . . I was driving across Austin to see some friends when an old lady in a white Cadillac pulled out in front of me. I was on my motorcycle at the time, and just managed to stop. For a brief moment I dreamed of raking the old bat with a burst of machine-gun fire, but that moment passed. Another idea had surfaced – what if *everybody* on the road was armed? CAR WARS was born.

It would have died if I hadn't run into Steve Jackson a few minutes later. I procrastinate a lot, and the idea would have been lost if he had not liked it. But I told him about it, and he said, "Why don't you write it up and bring it to a playtest session?" Four hours later, the rough draft was ready. It was *very* rough, and some flaws became evident immediately. For example, there was no provision for any maneuvers other than lane changes. That may sound strange, but the first version was merely highway combat, and the main action of highway combat is changing lanes. There were so many problems in the first draft that it was basically unplayable, but it was a good idea. After the short session of attempting to make it work, Steve said he wanted to "make a few notes" on the game . . .

A few days later I saw his "notes" for the first time. They were longer than the original draft, and included arena combat, role-playing, and how to maneuver. It was about this time that I realized that there really was some potential for a good game in all this. Since I didn't know that much about the ways of game design, Steve offered to collaborate with me on the work. (In other words, Steve would make it work and teach me a lot about games in the process.)

For a couple of months development came to a screeching halt, due to school and work. Very early in this period, Steve decided he like the title *Car Wars* (as opposed to my own *Carkill*) and it took me a lot of time to get used to it.

In late December and early January, we did much of the basic work on the game, and finally got a good playable version. Reaction seemed to be positive, so we got to work on the details of handling, acceleration, armament, and vehicle classes. Handling was determined by hours of road tests. Acceleration was much the same, but simplified greatly from real life. We used existing armaments for most of the weapons types, and designed new ones where there were no examples. Vehicle classes were fairly straightforward, but the numbers to go with them were not. The spaces in each car, along with the weight each would carry, were eventually derived from real automobiles after a good deal of research.

Steve suggested a rationale for the game, and we gradually worked out the future history. Finally, after almost a year of playtests, research, proofreading, and test driving, CAR WARS hit the stands. It seems to be popular, and I'm already working on a sequel. Steve says I'll probably be able to do CAR WARS stuff for a long time. The way I drive, I sure hope so.

Playtest Session Excerpts

People tend to get weird at *Car Wars* sessions. Here are some examples.

At the Owlcon tournament, there was a mix of motorcycles and cars in an arena. In the course of the fight, one car decided that the best way to get an oncoming motorcyclist was to do a bootlegger turn into him, swatting him like a bug. The only real flaw in this strategy was the fact the car had only one point of armor on the side facing the collision. The closing speed was about 60 miles per hour, and the cyclist had no time to react. When the damage was calculated, the bike was demolished and the car had taken enough damage to kill the driver. The game master's decision was that the bike had come through the door of the car and landed in the driver's lap. Lesson 1: Think before you commit yourself to anything!

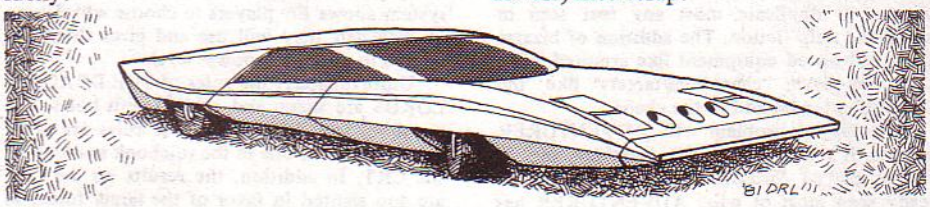
The same tournament also provided the spectacle of a man having his car shot out from under him, causing him to jump out and try to run to another vehicle. The other car was in fairly good shape, but its driver had been trashed. The brave runner was killed, of course, but it was a nice try. Lesson 2: Go for it! You might get lucky.

In one playtest session, I was on a team with another guy. We were on cycles, and our first opponent had just rolled out due to bad tires (holes in 'em). At the far end of the arena, a sidecar rig had junked a car with the lucky throw of a grenade. My partner tried to turn and intercept the sidecar rig, but lost control and fell off. He wasn't hurt, so I swung wide to go around him. The sidecar rig was still a long way off, so I had plenty of time to get ready, right? Wrong. My dear teammate decided he needed my bike more than I did. As I was riding by, he unslung his submachine gun and blew me off the bike. However, the sidecar rig rolled up and blew him away before he could get the thing upright. Lesson 3: Don't trust anyone – and carry a hand weapon.

CAR WARS: Books and Movies

When I find myself talking to other gamers about CAR WARS, the comment I hear most often is "Wasn't there a book about that?" Actually, there have been several stories on the theme. The best example, in my own opinion, is Alan Dean Foster's "Why Johnny Can't Speed." Like CAR WARS, it is set in a world where autoduelling is allowed on the highway, and most vehicles are armed. Harlan Ellison's "Along the Scenic Route" is similar, but the weapons and vehicles are much more fanciful than ours. Roger Zelazny has written some good vehicular combat stories, among them "Devil Car" and "Last of the Wild Ones." His novel *Damnation Alley*, and the movie of the same name, feature a giant, heavily armed ATV capable of taking on a whole pack of armed cyclists.

It is easy to find other movies. James Bond films tend to have various fast autos featuring oil jets, paint sprays, machine guns, rocket launchers, and great bodies (of various sorts). In 1972, Universal released *Duel*, a film written by Richard Matheson and directed by Steven Spielberg, about a confrontation between an automobile driver and an anonymous trucker. Other films worth noting are *Mad Max*, *Death Race 2000*, *Condorman*, *Stripes*, and a rarity, *The Cars that Ate Paris*, a strange Australian movie about a small town that lives by ambushing passing cars and breaking them (and their drivers) into scrap.



Capsule Reviews

THE SPACE GAMER reviews board games, role-playing games, computer games, video games, and game supplements. We review play-by-mail games if a reviewer is enrolled. We will review any science fiction or fantasy game if the publisher supplies a copy. We do not guarantee reviews of historical wargames. TSG may publish a review of a game we are not sent – IF a reader submits a review.

The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine.

For information on writing reviews for TSG, see our Writer's Guide, published on page 20 of this issue.

Games for which reviews have been assigned or received include: *The Burgundy Pit, The Castle, Crucis Margin, Demon Lord, Diadem, Doom of the Singing Star, The Dragon Tree Spell Book, Fifth Frontier War, Fighting Ships, Hydronauts, Interstellar Skirmishes, Journey to the Center of the Circle, Lara's Tower, Library Data A-M, Lomodo IVA, Marooned/Marooned Alone, Marooned on Ghostring, Nithus, Ordeal by Eshaar, Oregon Trail, The Outworlds, Portals of Irontooth, Prince of Thieves, Ragnarok, Sapies, The Shattered Alliance, Space Empires, Spacefarers, Starfire III, Star Patrol, Starship Lay-Out Sheets, Star Viking, The Sultan's Pearl, Sword Lords, Thieves' Guild IV, Transylvania, Wabor-Parn, Wild West, Wizardry,* and *ZISMV: Vlezhdatl.*

Games for which we are currently seeking reviewers include: *Car Wars, Empire of the Over-Mind, Griffin Mountain, Imperial Data Recovery System,* and *Space Ace 21.*

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

ADVENTURER (Yaquinto); $7.00. Designed by Thomas O'Neill and George Petronis. Album game with fold-out map, three game charts, 111 extra-thick counters, two dice, 16 page rulebook. Two or more players; playing time 1-2 hours. Published 1981.

ADVENTURER is a game of man to man brawling in the future. Players can brawl with one another in either a spaceport canteena or on the deck of a starship, with weapons ranging from a dagger to a lasersword or a blaster. ADVENTURER uses the same mechanics as Yaquinto's highly successful *Swashbuckler* game, wherein players plot their moves with a short notation and execute them simultaneously. The game aims more for space opera than detailed tactical simulation.

ADVENTURER is every bit as much fun as *Swashbuckler*. The players move their characters about a crowded map, blithely throwing chairs and containers at each other, flipping over tables, and loosing pot shots with blasters. The game system is very free-form, allowing the players to duplicate most any feat seen in movies or pulp fiction. The addition of bizarre aliens, advanced equipment like armored suits, and non-player characters/targets like the android bartender add to the chaos.

The biggest problem with ADVENTURER is that it's *too* much like *Swashbuckler*. If you've played *Swashbuckler*, then you've already seen most of what ADVENTURER has to offer. Few innovations are introduced, and the same old problems are there – like only being able to flip a table if you're standing on the end of it, instead of near the middle.

ADVENTURER is worth your time if you've never played *Swashbuckler*, or if you'd like to see a few new innovations on the latter. It can be a lot of fun to match French swordsmen against a blaster-armed octopus man, especially if you have a demented mind.

– Paul O'Connor

THE DRAGONLORDS (FGU); $15.00. Designed by Scott B. Bizar and Adam L. Gruen. Bagged, with 21-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 23" x 29" four-color map, 600 counters, 7 spell and reference sheets. 2 players; playing time variable. Published 1978.

THE DRAGONLORDS is a fantasy boardgame set on the peninsula of Anador. Two nations, each led by a wizard-emperor, vie for control. To win the game, a player must either eliminate the opposing wizard or control all castles on the board. At the beginning of each turn, units are bought by spending Dragons (the monetary unit of Anador). Then, each player moves and has combat, and finally, taxes are collected from each friendly castle.

The best things about THE DRAGONLORDS are the economic and magic systems. The economic system is clean and simple, and creates some interesting strategic alternatives. The great variety of units available, including several different races as well as air and sea units, adds more dimensions to the game. The magic system allows the players to choose which type of magician they will use and gives them the chance to raise their power level.

Unfortunately, the rules of THE DRAGONLORDS are vague and riddled with holes. For example, two different sets of rules are given for withdrawal, one in the rulebook and one on the CRT. In addition, the results on the CRT are too slanted in favor of the larger force, so that with even a minor advantage in troops, one side can inflict heavy casualties upon the other while taking few or no casualties himself.

Those who enjoy conquest on the grand scale and who have a strong interest in fantasy should enjoy THE DRAGONLORDS and may even want to develop its background further. However, it requires a good deal of time and effort to play. As the rules say, "a game of Dragonlords can go on almost indefinitely." The short game alleviates this problem to some extent, but interferes with some of the rules that were designed for the long game. As the designers state in the introduction, THE DRAGONLORDS requires more imagination than most games. Unfortunately, much of this imagination will have to be spent on the rules and background.

– Bob Popham and Chris Czarra

FANTASY LAND (Lange Games); $9.95. Designed by Gary Lange. Box includes a pamphlet of rules, two dice, a scorepad, and three cardstock gamecards, printed on both sides. 1 to 6 players; playing time distressingly brief. Published 1981.

Players are transported to Fantasyland, a sort of Westworld/Disneyland clone, where they face WWI aerial dogfights, magical duels, gunfights, jousts, space battles, gladiatorial contests and, ultimately, near-fatal boredom. Each game consists of a mindless exercise of rolling dice against a non-player opponent, providing little or no chance to execute any sort of strategy.

A game set in a Fantasyland type setting is an interesting idea, and could probably make for a good game. However, this game ranges from inane to merely ridiculous. The artwork, if it can be called such, is horrible, showing absolutely no artistic talent whatsoever.

FANTASY LAND is an absolute disaster at any price. If you see this turkey in a store, draw a gun and shoot it.

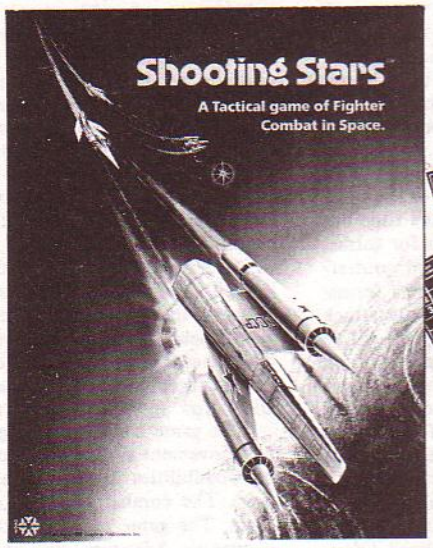
– Paul O'Connor

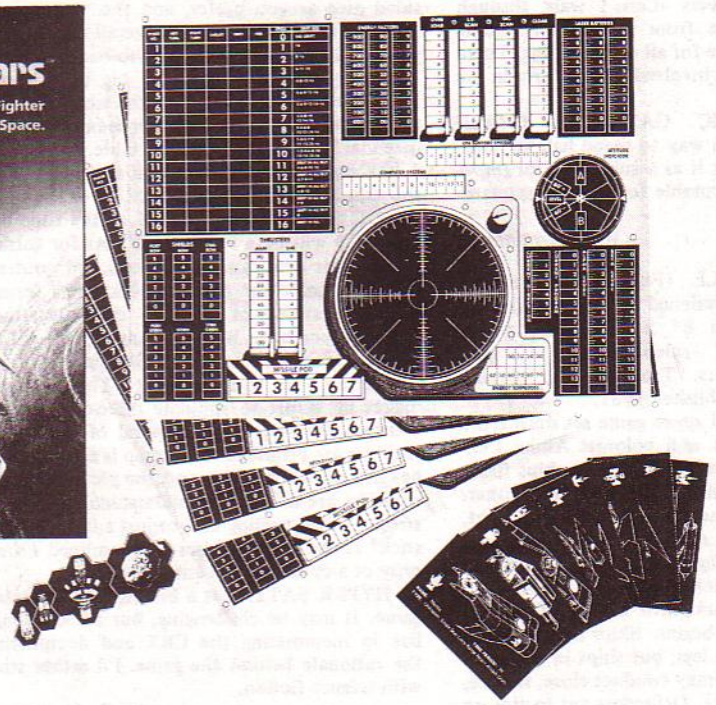
THE GENERIC GANGSTER CHASE GAME (Generic Games, P. O. Box 643, Bloomington, IN 47402); $2.50. Designed by John Thompson. One 8½" x 11" cover sheet/rules sheet, three identical 8½" x 11" maps (printed on both sides), 7 counters, bagged. Two players plus one referee; playing time 30 minutes. Published 1981.

Big Jim, a hit man for the Mob, is after Ace Wilson, top reporter for the *Daily Thunderbolt*. The first scenario takes place in an office building – can Ace escape with the evidence before Jim plugs him? The second scenario has Ace trapped in a warehouse by Jim – can Ace stay alive until the police arrive? Each player uses one map and two counters. During his turn, each player listens (to locate his enemy), moves and fights. The referee, who has his own map and counters, lets players know if they hear each other (pointing out which of 12 directions the opponent is in) or see each other. Big Jim is the only player with a gun.

Each scenario is different. "Warehouse" is primarily hide-and-go-seek, with Ace hoping to miss discovery until the police arrive. "Office" is more of a pursuit game, with the faster Ace trying to out-think the armed-and-dangerous Jim. Because of the referee, each player knows only what his counter can see on the map. Every decision becomes major: is Jim lurking about the next corner? How far can I move without being heard? Ace has the advantage of speed, but one false step too close to Big Jim can bring the hit man down on him at point blank range. Jim has the gun, but he must

Shooting Stars™





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- Vector Movement

Components: The boxed game components include a 21½" by 27½" mapboard, a sheet of die cut unit counters, game table cards, Ship Specification Cards for the major crafts used in the game, Ship Control Console Cards, a complete rule book with scenarios, two dice and a sturdy plastic tray.

Scale: 100 Kilometers per hex, 5-10 seconds per Turn, individual ships.

Number of Players: Two to Four

Average Playing Time: Thirty minutes to three hours depending on scenario.

Shooting Stars is a tactical level game of fighter vs. fighter combat beginning in the near future. Scenarios range from the first U.S.-Soviet Space War, to Asteroid Pirates, to Alien invaders. The unique movement system gives the feel of piloting a one man craft in space while at the same time providing a fast paced, smooth flowing game. The Advanced Game and Optional Rules allow for Energy usage in fifteen areas of ship's functions and provide a myriad of special weapons. Scenarios range from Solitaire scenarios such as battling an unmanned outpost, destroying "Rebel Blockade runners" and protecting an Orbital Depot from "Asteroid Pirates" to multi player situations where a group of fighters attack a space station. Ship Specification cards provide information for eight different types of fighter craft, while the scenarios provide the information for space stations, larger craft, the movement of Asteroids, fighting in the gravity influence of a Black Hole and much, much more.

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worry about covering all of Ace's potential movements.

The only major problem in the rules relates to counter facing, which is totally garbled. This is not critical since the game plays well if you forget about facing. Other holes in the rules have obvious answers (Can I walk through walls? Can I listen from a shadow?). Some players may not care for all of the hiding. There is also a lot of luck involved, particularly in the "Office" scenario.

THE GENERIC GANGSTER CHASE GAME is a pleasant way to spend half an hour. I would not suggest it as a substitute for *Imperium*, but it is acceptable for beer-and-pretzels play.

– W. G. Armintrout

HYPER BATTLE (Future and Fantasy Games); $5.00. Designed by Rich Slabbekoorn. Boxed; one 8" x 11" map, a 20-page 5½" x 8" rulebook, 2 reference cards, 160 counters. Two players, playing time 30 minutes. Published 1981.

This is a tactical space game set during the war between Earth and colonial Alpha Centauri, featuring faster-than-light starships firing faster-than-light artillery shells at each other. The first phase in each turn in move and fight, during which ships move one at a time (conducting attacks *during* movement). Next comes damage control, when players roll to put their face-down ships back into action. Then the other player's turn begins. Ships may fire at a range of 8 hexes or less, but ships in the same hex as enemy ships may conduct close, suicide, and ramming attacks. Defenders get to fire on attackers that enter their hex. Formations of ships may combine their strengths to make a single attack against one enemy per turn.

I like the little things about HYPER BATTLE – the thick counters (I'm tired of wafer-thin ones), the clean die-cutting job, the inclusion of reference cards containing both CRTs, the provision of formation counters to replace unwieldy counter stacks, the dual CRT system which allows you to use 6- or 20-sided dice as you prefer, and the "campaign" rules for keeping track of an overall victor when playing the five scenarios back-to-back.

Unfortunately, I hate the big thing about this game – the rules. This is the weirdest, least explicable space game I've ever seen. The worst offender is the combat results table. At 5:1 and 1 hex range, for instance, you will hit 24% of the time and destroy the enemy 2% of the time. At 6:1 odds, you will hit 5% of the time but every hit will be a killer. WHY? As for formations, their continual expansions and contractions dominate the game, all because a formation – regardless of its size – can only attack one ship per turn. What has any of this got to do with space combat? Rich Slabbekoorn, you have given birth to a peculiarity! The game also makes no effort to simulate three-dimensional combat; the map is a flat pond of space. The graphics are primitive – the map is a plain black hexgrid on white paper and the pictures on the counters are difficult to understand. (Is the destroyer a ball trailing fire, or just a long knobby stick? Is the heavy cruiser a streamlined *Enterprise* or a cylinder with anterior fins?)

HYPER BATTLE is a bizarre space combat game. It may be challenging, but the challenge lies in memorizing the CRT and deciphering the rationale behind the game. I'd rather stick with science fiction.

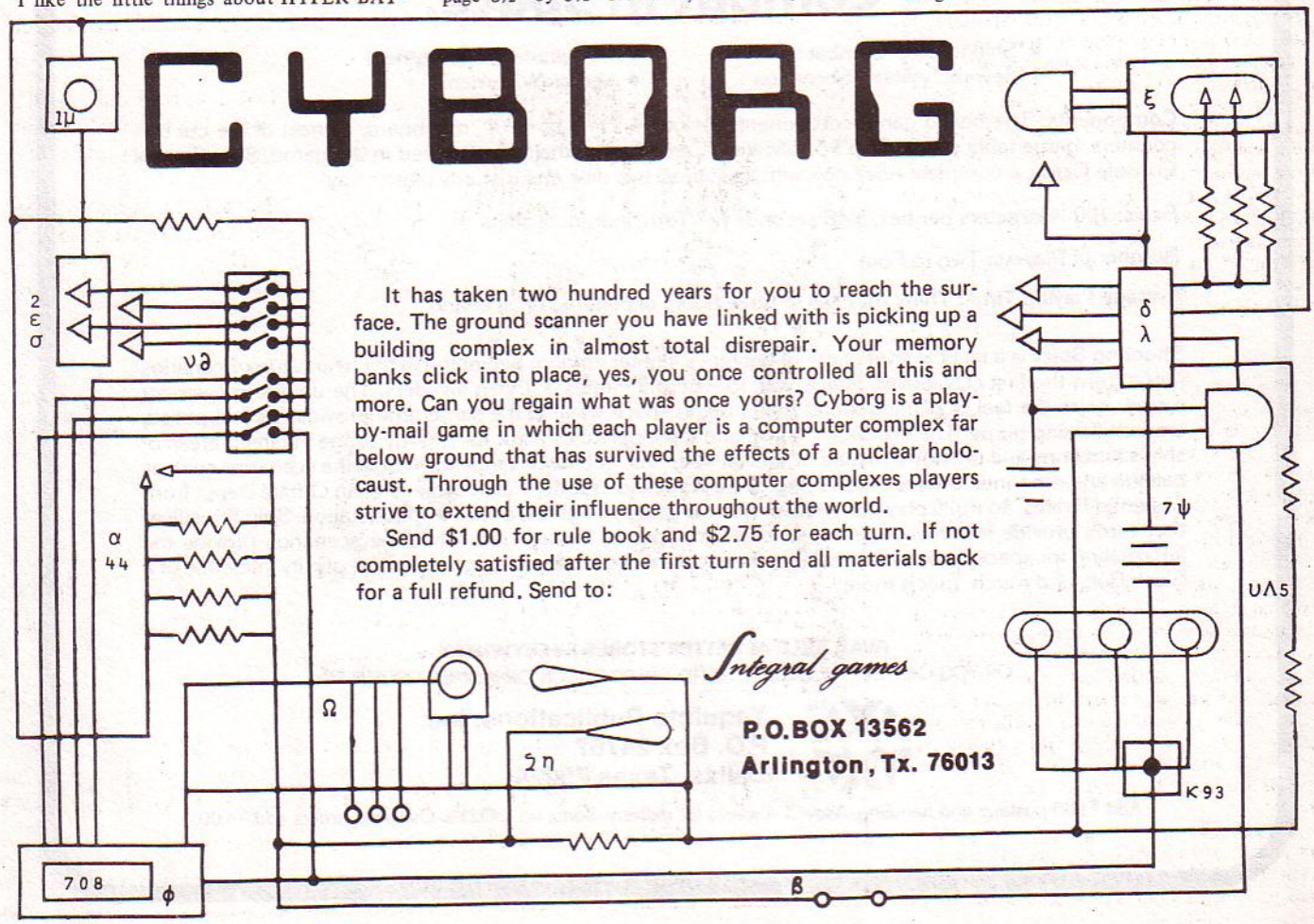
– W. G. Armintrout

TIME TUNNELS (Uncontrollable Dungeon Master); $4.50. Robert Von Gruenigen. Eight page 8½" by 5½" rulebook, one 14" by 12½" two-color map, and 224 nondie-cut counters in four colors. For 2-4 players; playing time about 90 minutes. Published 1981.

TIME TUNNELS is a small-format game of strategic space warfare. Each of the two to four players constructs a fleet of ships, paying for the components with energy crystals garnered from controlled worlds. Movement is simultaneous, with players recording the movements of units on paper. The counters for each side are nondescript and do not indicate specific ships or classes, but simply the location of that player's forces, thus making it possible for a player to shuffle a ship across the board by moving along a "ladder" of previously positioned ships and never moving a counter. Combat is handled simply: players select targets, and roll the dice to determine how many of their laser bolts or "metra" missiles strike home. The difference between the final attack strength and the target's shield strength determines the number of components destroyed. Players battle to control all the planets on the map. Advanced rules allow for specialists to increase capabilities.

The game has some strong points. The plotted movement system introduces some interesting possibilities for feints, maneuvers and surprise. The combat system is relatively fast and clean. The game map is in the shape of three concentric hexagons; the exact size used depends on the number of players.

The rules, however, are poorly organized; the rules for constructing ships are printed under "special attributes," for example. The counters are terrible. Besides not being die-cut, they are unevenly spaced, making it difficult to cut them apart. The symbols on the counters (a demon, a weird elephant-like creature, something with antennae and another something that looks like a beehive with eye) add little to the game.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TIME TUNNELS has no new concepts or anything particularly exciting about it. Neither is the game an outright turkey; it shows some thought and plays well. There are just better games on the subject and in this price range.

– Tony Watson

THE TROJAN WAR (Metagaming); $6.95. Designed by G. Arthur Rahman. Boxed "Metagame" with 240 die-cut counters, 16" x 24" map, plastic pouch, 16 page rulebook and a die. Two players; playing time varies. Published 1981.

TROJAN WAR is a game of heroic combat on and around the walls of Troy during its famous, eleven year siege. The emphasis is on individual heroes and their conflicts, with the influence of the gods represented through various combat bonuses for the characters involved. The game provides no less than ten different scenarios in addition to a campaign game simulating the entire siege. The scenarios deal primarily with important events lifted from *The Iliad*, such as the death of Achilles. And, yes, provisions are made for a Trojan Horse in the campaign game.

THE TROJAN WAR uses an attack/counter-attack combat system that helps translate the "feel" of Homeric warfare. Naming each of the combat counters adds a nice touch, too. The game is basically simple and fast-moving, though it tends to be a bit bloody. This is due, in part, to a rule which takes away victory points from a player if he isn't being aggressive enough.

Despite the above qualities, the game comes off rather flat. The map is dull and generally uninteresting, showing a blank battle plain with a single wall of Troy running along one edge and the Greek sea wall along the other. I recognize the relative historical accuracy of the map, but it doesn't make it any more interesting to look at. The intervention of the gods is also handled in a rather abstract manner, being little more than a series of magic "bennies" that befall the heroes without seeming rhyme or reason. It would add a lot of flavor to the game if we knew from which god or goddess these gifts were coming, and for what reasons.

While lacking a bit in color, THE TROJAN WAR still provides a reasonably accurate, playable simulation of the battles outside the walls of Troy. If the period interests you, you might want to look this one up. Otherwise, leave THE TROJAN WAR on the shelf.

– Paul O'Connor

UNDEAD (SJ Games); $3.00. Designed by Steve Jackson. Packaged 4½" x 7" in a ziploc bag, with one 4¼" x 7" 24-page rulebook, 17" x 21" gamesheet (which has maps and tables needed for play), and 112 full-color, uncut counters. Two or more players plus a gamemaster (semi-optional). Playing time 2-6 hours. Published 1981.

If you like Dracula, you'll love this game. One player takes the role of Dracula, fresh off the boat, trying to get a fanghold in London by distributing as many of his coffins around as he can. The other player(s) take the role(s) of Professor van Helsing, Arthur Holmwood, and other vampire hunters, who search for coffins, investigate victims to see if they were really attacked by a vampire, keep deathwatches if they think they were, and defend themselves if attacked. Dracula can also shapechange into a bat, wolf, or mist.

Though the game requires a gamemaster, it can still play well with only two players in a pinch. It is fairly playable, and is a bigger game than you might think in its three-dollar package. Many actions are possible within the specifics of the rules, and any action that a player can convince the gamemaster is feasible may be used. In fact, this freedom of play is one of its major assets: it is really a role-playing game, within its simple-seeming format. There are also an essentially infinite number of locations, since places within the areas defined on the map are defined only by one player or the other having been there. Dracula could hide any number of coffins in any number of different places, all within one area of the map, and each cache would be found separately.

This game's flaws are its near-necessity of a gamemaster and its eventual loss of newness. After a few games the vampire hunters will tire of moving, searching, destroying, recuperating and so on, while Dracula runs rings about them. This is not to say that Dracula necessarily has an edge, but several turns may pass before anything seems to happen for the hunters, and they may soon wonder if they are playing by themselves. But when something does happen it makes it all worthwhile.

All in all, this game is an excellent value.

– David Dyche

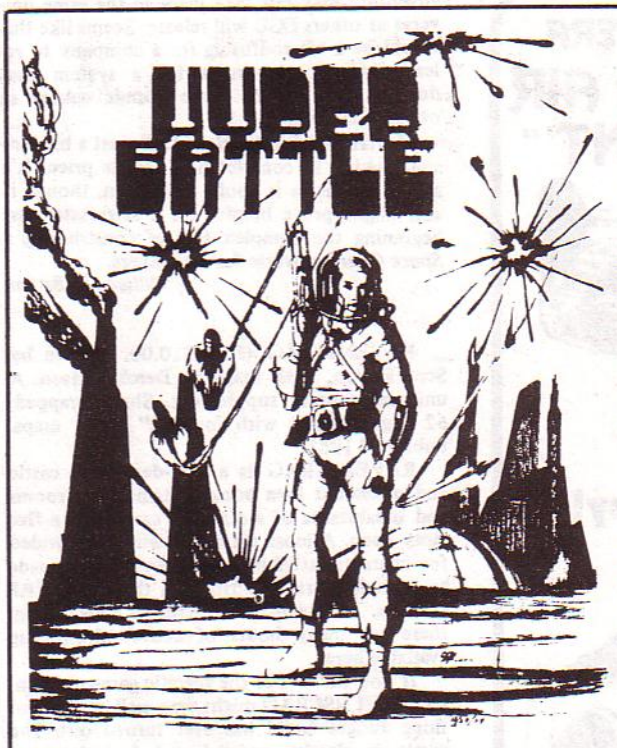
SUPPLEMENTS

THE FREE CITY OF HAVEN (Gamelords); $14.95. Designed by Richard Meyer and Kerry Lloyd. 126-page booklet, 12 maps, bagged. 2 or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

HAVEN is the first of three fantasy game modules describing a city of 80,000. The descriptions are based on Gamelord's *Fantasy System*, but it can be converted for use with other RPGs, especially D&D. This module describes much of the city, while the other two will describe in more detail the most dangerous parts of town.

HAVEN consists of history/background of the city and its seven boroughs, descriptions of nearly four hundred non-player characters, and descriptions of scenarios involving these NPCs, in many instances rooted in the struggle between nobles and guildsmen which dominates Haven. The background is good, though Haven seems to exist in a power vacuum so that all eyes are turned inward on the city, not outward toward the surrounding lands. The NPCs are excellent, a boon for those GMs who don't have the time/confidence to devise good characters for use in a city. The scenarios (and random encounters) are imaginative and believable. You won't run into vampires, ogres, or evil wizards in *this* town. On the other hand, there are few maps of individual buildings (some of these are supplied in the *Thieves' Guild* series) and the treasure which might be found in many buildings and homes is rarely mentioned.

In fact, HAVEN is not a place for hack-and-slash adventures. Players who become bored after half an hour without a battle don't belong here. It is designed for hard core *role-players*, those fans of improvisational theater who like to be their characters regardless of what the



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character happens to be doing, who like to chat with a shopkeeper or drinking mate for an hour. Characters are expected to interact with NPCs in some way other than theft or slaughter. There's hardly a monster to be seen. In this form the city can accommodate characters of widely varying levels, but it will work better in the long run with relatively inexperienced characters.

In my opinion HAVEN stands out head and shoulders above the old Judges Guild stand-by *City State of the Invincible Overlord*. But because it is oriented strongly toward hard-core role-playing, other "city" modules might be more useful to many GMs. Running HAVEN would certainly challenge a GM's abilities more than running a smaller but more fully described module such as TSR's *Hommlet*. HAVEN gives fewer details in order to accommodate several different game systems, and the GM must play many subtle roles. I suspect the later modules will have more potential for battle, but HAVEN will always be a peaceful town with adventures behind the scenes, involving people, not monsters. I can't decide for you whether this is what you need. But it's a damn good job.

– Lewis Pulsipher

MARTIGAN BELT (FGU); $5.00. Designed by Stephen D. Kingsley. Adventure for *Space Opera*. One 8½" x 11" 22-page book. Published 1981.

MARTIGAN BELT is FGU's first *Space Opera* adventure scenario. It concerns, as one would guess by the title and introductory situation, adventuring in the asteroid belt of the Martigan system in the Procyon starsector. In actuality, the book focuses more on Martigan III, the primary world of the system. The introductory situation concerns the loss of a Janus Mining Company Meteor Miner in the belt. The players are representatives of the various other companies on the planet who are sent to assist Janus locate and recover the vessel. To aid in this scenario, pregenerated characters are provided, along with stats and deck plans of a meteor miner ship, and some guidelines on finding minerals and artifacts in the belt – not to mention the Slorte, a siliconoid creature found in the belt that bears no small resemblance to the Horta of *Star Trek*. For use in other scenarios hinted at, information is given on all the worlds in the system, with travel distances, and a comprehensive description is provided of Martigan III, complete with interstellar survey, contact service and bureau of intelligence reports; maps of the planet and starport; and illustrations and description of the major flora and fauna of the planet.

The section on the various life forms that inhabit Martigan III is probably the most interesting item in the scenario pack. While the descriptions are a bit brief, reflecting SO's overall neglect of this aspect, the illustrations make up for much of this. Especially dangerous – and thus potentially the most useful – are the Togaht, a reptilian lurker which builds subsurface pit traps, and the Mindfuzz, a plant which releases hallucinogenic pollen.

The main problem with MARTIGAN BELT is that it is really deceptive in its choice of titles. A starmaster will have a much easier time using the scenario based on Martigan III than he'd have trying to administer the "main" adventure. Not enough information is given. Exactly what happened to the lost ship is never explained other than it exploded, despite the cryptic message suggesting attack and sabotage. The starmaster will need to improvise quite a bit to run it to any successful conclusion. Another point that bothers me is the note that this adventure may not take place in the same universe as others FGU will release. Seems like this would be a bit confusing for a company to release official adventures for a system that doesn't exist in the same cosmic sphere as others they've done.

Overall, MARTIGAN BELT is just a bit slim and lacking in completeness for its price. It's not as useful as it could have been, though it still might prove helpful for a starmaster just beginning the complex feat of constructing a *Space Opera* universe for his players.

– William A. Barton

RAVENSCRAG (JG); $10.00. Written by Scot Fulton, with maps by Derek Watson. A universal fantasy supplement. Shrinkwrapped, 62 page booklet with four 22" x 34" maps. Published 1981.

RAVENSCRAG is a well-developed castle and attendent area book, detailing the rooms and inhabitants of a six-level castle and a five story keep. A loose set of statistics is provided for character attributes, with an attempt made to include attributes from all the major FRP systems. The quantity of material is staggering; there are many hours of active adventuring available here.

If you throw out the specific game mechanics, RAVENSCRAG might very well be the best thing Judges Guild has ever turned out. The castle is clearly mapped and logically constructed. If run properly, RAVENSCRAG could provide FRP players with a good idea of how a medieval castle actually works.

The biggest problem with RAVENSCRAG is that it claims to be a universal fantasy supplement. Simply listing attribute numbers for each of the major systems does not a universal supplement make. Monsters are still classified by armor class, hit dice, and hit points plus a measure of damage done. There is no mention of how a T&T player should rate the armor or the weapons, or of how a TFT player should determine his to-hit number. Similarly ignored are *DragonQuest*, *RuneQuest*, and *C&S*. In short, the term "universal fantasy supplement" must be translated to "unlicensed D&D product."

If you play D&D, or think you can overcome the problems of a non-specific text, then RAVENSCRAG is an excellent buy for the money.

– Paul O'Connor

STAR SECTOR ATLAS 1: THE TERRAN SECTOR (FGU); $6.00. Designed by Edward E. Simbalist. Supplement to *Space Opera*. One 8½" x 11" 52-page atlas with 17" x 22" pullout quadrant map. Published 1981.

STAR SECTOR ATLAS 1: THE TERRAN SECTOR is FGU's first set of starsector maps and planetary descriptions for its *Space Opera* role-playing system. It is to *Space Opera* what *The Spinward Marches* was to *Traveller* – a fully mapped out sector of space in which players could adventure without the gamemaster having to take the time to create it all himself. Maps included with the atlas show the Terran starsector as mapped out using the *Space Opera* charting system; the sector with primary starline routes; and the entire Terran quadrant of some 520 subsectors, some named, some left blank, giving an idea of what areas future atlases may cover. Along with the maps are fairly comprehensive descriptions of the major planets of most systems depicted on the maps, providing SO stats and various items of information on inhabitants, resources, dangerous lifeforms, etc. Some systems are left undescribed for individualization by the GM. All the worlds in Sol system are described, including the L-5 colonies and a 10th planet, called Spectre. The atlas also provides information on the various spacelines of the sector and introduces it all with a rather interesting future history of mankind's development from initial surveys by the Irsol race in the mid-20th century to Terra's growth as a starfaring confederation.

The TERRAN SECTOR atlas is most notable in the completeness of its planetary descriptions. A GM shouldn't have any difficulty administering adventures using the guidelines here. He'll have much more to work with than *Traveller* refs did with the sketchier info in *The Spinward Marches*, yet room enough is left for improvisation when the need arises. Several echoes of popular SF will be found in some of the world descriptions, giving a nice feel of familiarity with some of the planetary stops. This does get a bit excessive at times, though. Note Archenar VI with its stillsuited fremen, sandworms and spice, and the "United Federation of Planets."

There aren't a lot of problems with STAR ATLAS 1. Most are due to inherent faults in the parent system – the overcomplication of some calculations, etc. There are some annoying typos, but not as many as there could be and most are minor at that. Some followers of hard SF might find some of the excesses here a bit hard to swallow, but then again, many of these will not be playing *Space Opera* anyway.

If you're a *Space Opera* player or GM, you'll probably find STAR ATLAS 1: THE TERRAN SECTOR an invaluable play aid. Even those who prefer other SF systems might find some useful items to adapt to their games as well.

– William A. Barton

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STONES OF THE SELT (Dragon Tree Press); $5.00. Designed by Tom Bell. D&D supplement. One 16-page booklet. Published 1981.

STONES OF THE SELT is the first in a planned series of five modules describing islands in the Epxae Islands campaign. The series is an interconnected mystery, though the publishers state that each module will be independently playable. The pages are offset 50% reduced from typewriter copy, with the island and the city maps on the heavy paper covers.

I have mixed feelings about this module, which is intended for D&D though it might be adapted for similar games. It differs from the typical adventure module insofar as the party must solve a mystery. But unless the party not only finds the clues to the mystery (which continues into the next module), but also manages to destroy the enemy ships, the mainland is apparently doomed by the enemy superweapon. Without a big dose of good fortune, or a soft-hearted GM, no party of first to fifth level characters is going to survive, let alone prevail. In my view a FRP adventure should be a game of skill, among other things, but in this module chance (or ability to con the GM) counts for almost everything, (though only skillful players will have any chance at all of survival).

While the player-character party is supposed to be 4-6 characters, the players take along almost 160 fourth level NPCs – and they need them, for there are hundreds of the enemy. Fortunately, a simple method for allowing dozens of NPCs to fight each other is provided, and it's quite possible that no large battle will occur. Nonetheless, the players are chiefs with Indians as strong or stronger than themselves.

More than six of the 16 pages comprise a "fictional example of what has happened to players in the past." Of the two parties described, one happened to cast a detect magic spell at the right time to find the key magic item (I suspect GM hints); otherwise they would have died. The other, thanks to an incredibly soft-hearted (or soft-headed) GM, managed to blast a half-mile long canal through a plateau and into a mine, else they, too, might have died.

Regarded as fiction *per se*, the story's archaic style is tedious (as well as inconsistent) and the plot is unbelievable. It is amusing and interesting as an account of how two parties managed to survive, but much too long for that purpose.

I don't think I could make enough changes to render this adventure playable in my campaign (which is more or less straight AD&D). A Judges Guild module of comparable length would cost about $4. For $5.50 you'd get a lot more adventure-for-the-skillful from TSR. Mystery adventures have been constructed without resort to hundreds of NPCs and monsters. The physical and grammatical standards of STONES are not the best, either. All in all, I can't recommend it, but if you see it in a shop you might take a look. If Dragon Tree would combine two islands in their next module, or reduce the price, they might have a more competitive product.

– *Lewis Pulsipher*

SWORDS & SORCERERS (FGU); $8.50. Designed by Edward E. Simbalist and Wes Ives. 8½" x 11" 94-page supplement to *Chivalry & Sorcery*. Published 1978.

SWORDS & SORCERERS presents historical data, mythological concepts, and game mechanics for inclusion of Vikings, Mongols, and Celts into a *Chivalry & Sorcery* medieval/fantasy campaign. There are additions to the original mass combat system for European medieval campaigns as well: options for greater reality simulation, use of magic, inclusion of player-characters, and a system to resolve mass combat without use of miniature figurines.

The well-researched, entertainingly written lessons on medieval cultures and legends should be required reading for anyone planning a medieval fantasy game world, with any rules. The very complexity and number of the charts and tables suggests *living* in the fantasy world. Sure, it's confining for my priest of Odin to use rune magic, but if I see how Vikings thought magic works I am more involved in the role than if I'm a "cleric" with a laundry list of random spells. If I know effects and cure rates of real diseases, I experience the drama of the medieval physician using only primitive techniques and prayer.

The endless detail does become frustrating. You don't need most of it most of the time; players feel as if a game session is mostly just looking up one thing after another. Moreover, SWORDS & SORCERERS' accentuation of medieval culture, including legendary monsters and magic, repels players not accustomed to a medieval milieu where even adventurers "know their place" and are bound by moral restraints of society.

The problems with SWORDS & SORCERERS are those of the game it supplements. It is a superb supplement – adding color and depth to the basic game, not just altering or amending poorly-written rules. Anyone who plays *Chivalry & Sorcery*, or anyone who justs wants to see what fantasy *role*-playing is all about, wants to buy SWORDS & SORCERERS.

– *Ron Pehr*

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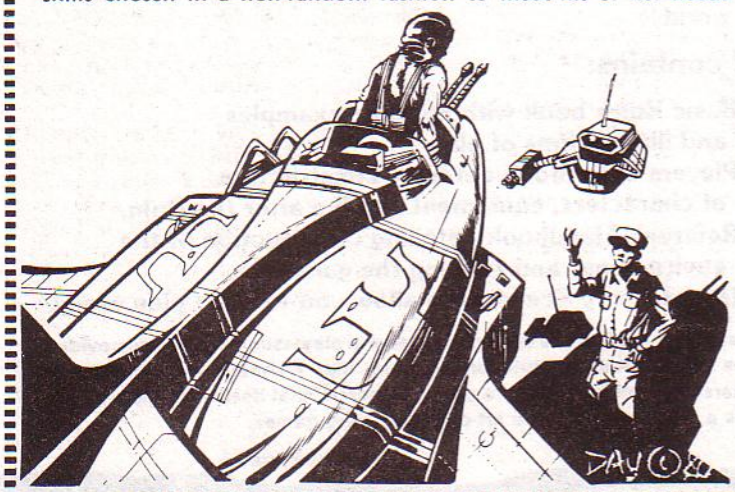

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THIEVES' WORLD (Chaosium); $16.00. Four 8½" x 11" booklets; three maps, boxed. Published 1981.

THIEVES' WORLD is an adventure supplement describing the city, history, and inhabitants of Sanctuary, the same city which is the setting for the anthologies *Thieves' World* and *Tales from the Vulgar Unicorn*, edited by Robert Asprin. Nine game systems are used: *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, Adventures in Fantasy, Chivalry & Sorcery, DragonQuest, Dungeons & Dragons, The Fantasy Trip, RuneQuest, Traveller,* and *Tunnels & Trolls.* The box is well made and covered with the painting from the first book of the series. A pair of the four booklets are duplicate copies of *The Players' Guide to Sanctuary,* which contains "the common knowledge" of the city. The *Game Master's Guide* furnishes more background material, small maps and the tables necessary to flesh out the city with businesses and encounters. The last book is *Personalities of Sanctuary.* This presents the statistics for all of the major characters of the anthologies as well as stats for most of the minor figures. They are arranged by and repeated through the nine role-playing systems. Altogether, the buyer gets 150 different pages of material. Three maps, well produced, complete the collection.

This supplement is a unique product of the joint efforts of several fantasy authors and the nine game publishers, all orchestrated by Chaosium and Midkemia Press. THIEVES' WORLD is surprisingly coherent for a project combining material from such diverse sources. Most of the game publishers or their representatives obviously approached their tasks with enthusiasm; others were more perfunctory but adequate.

A word about what THIEVES' WORLD does not do. It does not aim to provide a unified system for transmuting player characters from one role-playing system to another; it attends only to the denizens of Sanctuary. It has trouble with magic. The magic of the anthologies differs greatly in philosophy from that of several of the systems. In most instances the authors meet this with a frank admission of the difficulty and some helpful suggestions. Success sometimes surfaces – sort of. You can make similar comments about the integration of religion.

Nevertheless, it's worth the price. THIEVES' WORLD provides a wealth of information for repeated use but allows considerable flexibility for individual creativity and customizing. Physically, typographically and artistically it is a quality product. Highly recommended if you don't expect miracles and need a home for your adventurers.

–Harry White

TOWNS OF THE OUTLANDS (Midkemia Press); $6.95. Design by Richard A. Edwards, Wesley M. Divan, Russell Young. 76 page booklet. 2 or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

TOWNS OF THE OUTLANDS is the fourth "city" related product published by Midkemia Press. It is the first designed by outside designers. OUTLANDS provides detailed descriptions of six villages. Each village description contains a brief history of the village, a village map, and a building-by-building description which includes personality descriptions of the building's residents.

This product is very useful. Each of the towns is described in sufficient detail to allow them to serve either as a base of operations for a FRP campaign or merely as a place to spend the night. The towns' histories and current political situation are also detailed enough for the towns themselves to serve as "places of adventures." The six towns are distinctly different in character, climate, wealth, and purpose, so at least a couple ought to fit into any FRP campaign. Best of all, there is little of the rampant silliness which seems to infect many FRP products.

The product's main weak point is all but unavoidable. The character statistics will require some alteration before they can be used with any of the standard role playing systems. Some systems, such as *RuneQuest* will be more difficult to convert, while others, such as *D&D* will be fairly easy, but all will require some work. In any case, most player characters do not fight everyone they run into, so detailed statistics will not always be necessary.

This is an excellent product and I highly recommend it to any FRP game master.

– Rudy Kraft

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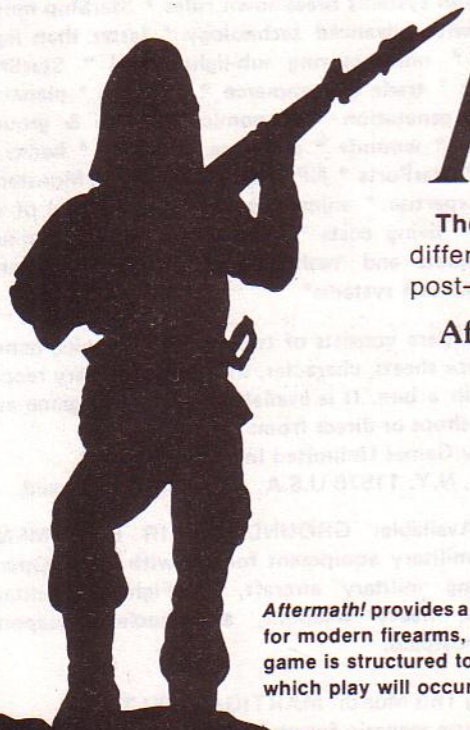

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PLAY AIDS

THE MORROW PROJECT VEHICULAR BLUEPRINTS (Timeline); $9.95. Designed by Richard Irwin. One set of 14 18" x 12" plans, 3-hole punched, envelope. Published 1981.

For those *Morrow Project* enthusiasts who like visual aids to increase the enjoyment of their post-holocaust role-playing, Timeline has released a set of 14 MORROW PROJECT VEHICULAR BLUEPRINTS – detailed exterior views of the basic *Morrow Project* vehicles, plus interior views of the MARS-One and Scientific-One military and scientific vehicles. Each plan shows one of the Morrow vehicles in front, top, side and top views, noting the various weaponry, doors, hatches, mounts and other features. The interior plans of the two heavier craft show control stations, bunks, lab facilities, stores, reactors and auxiliaries. Along with the various commando and scout vehicles, the airscout helicopter, the hovercraft and the heavy vehicles, the special HAAM suit with its heavy 20 mm rifle is included among the plans.

The blueprints are really nicely drawn, showing quite a bit of detail. The various views aid in determining vulnerable spots, hit locations, etc., in actual play. The interior views are especially useful for fleshing out those vehicles in specific scenario situations. Even those who don't play *The Morrow Project* might find these plans helpful in portraying vehicles in other RPGs.

The only real omission I can see is that it would have been nice to see the interiors of some of the smaller enclosed vehicles as well as their exteriors. And it may prove difficult to store these in a binder as they are 3-hole punched on one end only and folded in half, making it necessary to refold to store them at all. But these are minor problems.

Overall, the MORROW PROJECT VEHICULAR BLUEPRINTS are a well-conceived play-aid to an excellent SF role-playing system.

–William A. Barton

COMPUTER GAMES

COMPUTER ACQUIRE (Avalon Hill); $20. Cassette for the PET 16K, the Apple II 16K, and the TRS-80 Model I Level II 16K. One to six players; playing time 1-2 hours. Cannot be saved. Published 1980.

One sees a numbered grid into which one places "hotels" from one of six randomly drawn lots. Each lot is a locus on the grid. If one joins two loci vertically or horizontally, then a hotel chain is formed. A number of chain names are available, ranging in prestige and stock value. As chains meet, one takes over the other with stock price changes and benefits. The goal is to become the wealthiest person on the board.

The best feature of this game is the ability to either play against the computer (at five levels of difficulty) or have the computer play against itself. The mechanics are clearly spelled out in the rules. This machine language program runs very rapidly and the computer nicely takes care of the bookkeeping.

My big beef is the absolute necessity of watching the computer play itself to learn the game. The very brief rule book gives one no idea how to amass your fortune or why the stock prices rise or fall. The graphics are terrible and you'll have to reorient yourself every turn as the board is erased and moved to the bottom or top of the screen.

I think I'm beginning to learn ACQUIRE. I'm certain I'm missing a lot of the nuances. The problem is that I've got a lot of good games that I can sit down and play intelligently after 15 minutes. If you enjoy multiparameter games and you're willing to spend twice that time just to learn what does what, then ACQUIRE may be for you. Otherwise wait for the second edition of the rules.

–Jon Mishcon

CONFLICT 2500 (Avalon Hill); $15.00. Cassette for the Atari 800 32K, the Apple II 16K, the PET 16K, and the TRS-80 Model I Level II 16K. One player; playing time 15 minutes to two hours. Cannot be saved. Published 1980.

The berserkers are coming. They move invisibly, and each enemy ship is tough indeed. Your gallant band of warships, supported by a network of planetary and free bases, must seek out and destroy the invaders. There is both an operational phase, as one maneuvers on the quadrant map to discover the dastards; then there is a tactical phase as one aims the hyperfighter's energy cannon or sets a spacemine.

The combination of operational and tactical play is most appealing to me. The graphic representation, though not overwhelming, is quite good. The program allows the novice to set up very small scenarios and build up to megagames. Further, the more experienced player can "tilt at windmills" by setting the odds against himself. Although in basic, the program runs briskly.

The only negatives I might mention are the error corrections required (from the enclosed errata sheet) and the fact that the tactical display really doesn't give one the feeling of hyperlight pursuit. There is no sound.

Not great, but easily worth the fifteen bucks.

–Jon Mishcon

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THE COUNT (Adventure International); $14.95. Program by Scott Adams for the TRS-80, Apple II, PET, and Atari. One or more players; playing time varies. Published 1980.

Scott Adams is the recognized master of computer adventures. Currently ten programs in his adventure series are on the market; THE COUNT is adventure number five. In this adventure you wake up in a brass bed in Transylvania. Using one- and two-word commands to your computer (Get Up, Light Torch, etc.), you must find Count Dracula and kill him before he destroys you.

This is not a hack 'em up and grab the gold adventure. It is a puzzle that will require many hours to solve. Can you use the tent stake to kill Dracula and how can you keep him from stealing it? How do you use the dumbwaiter? What should you do with the garlic? How can you get into the oven and do you even need to get in it?

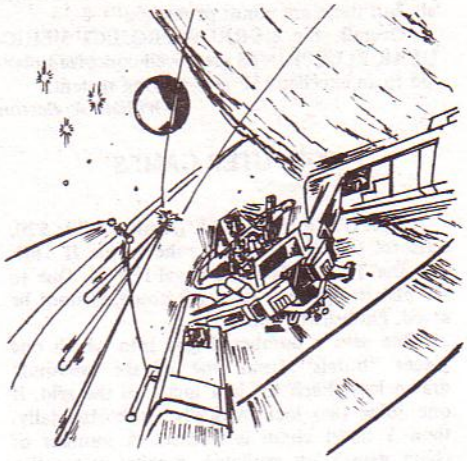
Adam's programs make you a character in an adventure book, not in an adventure movie. Do not expect sound or graphics.

Unless you are easily frustrated, I highly recommend this program.

–Bruce Campbell

INVADERS FROM SPACE (Acorn Software); 16K cassette $14.95, 32K disk $20.95. Program by Carl Miller for the TRS-80. One player; playing time 1 to 15 minutes. Published 1980.

This program is based on the classic arcade game *Space Invaders.* You must avoid the alien's bombs and destroy the invaders before they reach your base station. They come in groups of 35, and as soon as you destroy one wave, another appears.



There are several invader-type games on the market; so how is this one better than the others? One big plus is the variety of options you can set. You get to determine the frequency of bombs dropped by the invaders, enemy bomb accuracy, game speed, the maximum number of shots you have on screen at any given time, and the number of bases you will have. Based on these choices, a score weighting factor is determined. Another strength of this game is its graphics. The program is in machine language so movement is rapid. At times the screen is filled with your missiles, moving invaders, flashing explosions, and bombs being dropped at you. The game also has good sound, although not as haunting as in the arcade version.

I have two complaints about this program. First, the base station moves too rapidly. Barely touching an arrow key sends your base streaking across the screen. This problem can be overcome by allowing yourself multiple shots on screen, which reduces the score weighting factor, but is well worth the reduction. My second complaint is that the game is too easy to win. Scoring 655,350 points repels the invasion and ends the game. After a few hours I could win almost every time. I can still set parameters that make it more difficult to win, but would have liked an option to continue for a higher score until all bases were destroyed.

This is one of the better invader games available. Because of the extensive skill options available, it is particularly recommended if players with widely divergent abilities will be playing.

– Bruce Campbell

MIDWAY CAMPAIGN (Avalon Hill); $15.00. Cassette for 16K TRS-80, Apple and Pet. One player; playing time approximately 1 hour. Cannot be saved. Published 1980.

Commanding the 16th and 17th carrier task forces and the island airstrip at Midway, your mission is to keep the computer-controlled Japanese fleet from invading Midway and/or destroying your carriers. Using Avengers and Dauntlesses you can bomb enemy ships while your Wildcats either protect your bombers or your ships. Meanwhile the computer does the same with his Vals, Kates, and Zeros. Movement is done on the map (in which each area is defined by a period). Time is measured in 30 minute to 1 hour intervals. No combat can take place during the night, and all sighted enemy units disappear from the map.

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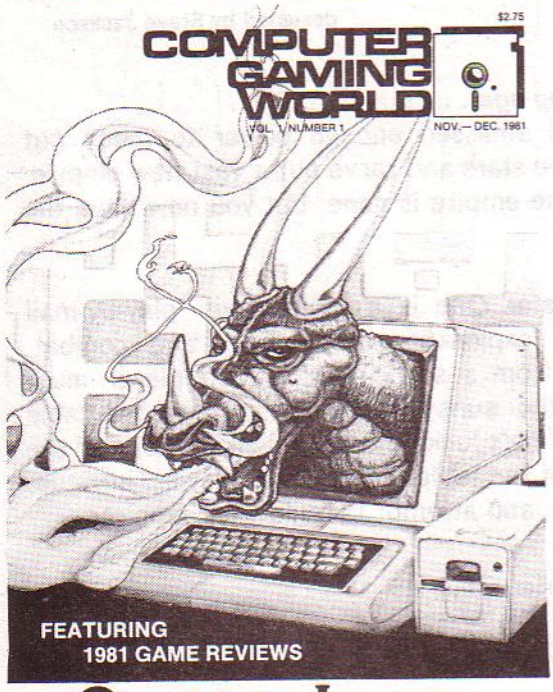

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With its multiple commands, MIDWAY CAMPAIGN is a rather realistic simulation of the actual battle. The flexibility of the game allows the player to develop many strategies. The program has sighting rules which force both commanders (computer and you) to find the enemy before attacking them. Another rule put in the program to simulate carrier combat is before you can launch your planes they must be armed on deck, and this opens the possibility of bombing planes while they are still on the decks of the carriers.

However, combat can get boring. For example, watching the computer compute 72 attacks against one carrier can get tiresome. Another problem is that carrier task forces cannot be broken up. Finally, planes cannot be directed against any specific carrier, but they are divided evenly between all the carriers in the task force.

Overall this is a very good game, and I highly recommend it for anyone who likes matching wits with the computer.

– Glenn Mai

PLAY BY MAIL

ZORPHWAR (Zorph Enterprises, 3646 Gibsonia Rd., Gibsonia, PA 15044); Rules $1.00, turns $1.50. Designed by Mike Shefler. Published 1980.

On a 2-D grid, 256 x 256, each player begins with a base ship-factory and a per-turn building allowance with which he may construct ships of 8 different sizes. Larger ships have more torpedoes and more energy for beam weapons and defense as well as a different special weapon for each ship class. Ability to accelerate varies inversely with size. Momentum is preserved turn-to-turn while the map's edges "wrap around." More points are scored for destroying larger opponents' ships. No diplomacy is allowed and anonymity is preserved, even after the final scores are announced.

It's fast and bloody with no logistics or diplomacy. There are both the constant tactical choices as well as strategic questions (who to head towards, whether to build a few big, powerful but slow ships or many smaller, quicker but more vulnerable ones). The special weapons add spice, each giving a different offensive or defensive capability. There are no obvious program bugs and only the rare transcription error.

A very big piece of graph paper is necessary as well as an appreciation of Pythagoras and a handy square-root calculator. You've got to enjoy plotting positions, courses and ranges or the game gets tedious. Novices sometimes inadvertently self-destruct (weapons fired on a bearing of 0^{o} go East instead of North). In early games, the rules kept changing.

Despite its flaws and imbalances the fast pace and brisk combat gives the biggest bang for the buck in PBM today. But it's not for the role-players or those who prefer complex games with diplomatic maneuvers.

– Sam Moorer

HISTORICAL GAMES

ACE OF ACES (Nova Game Designs); $13.95 per set. "Handy Rotary Series" and "Powerhouse Series," each with two 288 page, 4½" x 6" books. Two or more players; 10-15 minutes per dogfight. Published 1980.

All of the praise for this unique gaming system has been well deserved. Simply put, AofA is the most innovative thing to happen to the hobby since *Tactics II*. It takes literally five minutes to learn, can be played in less than 15 minutes, and requires nothing except the books. I watched two friends run through a game at a recent con while waiting in line.

The theme is plane-to-plane combat over France in World War I. Both players begin on a given page. They select their maneuver and tell the other player to go to the page indicated. There, they cross-reference to the manuever, and both will end up on same page of the respective books.

Each page gives you your view of the action, right down to taking a burst of machinegun fire. The selection process rewards players who select the "right" maneuver consistent with the history of air combat. And the two series are interchangeable, i.e., you can fight rotary against powerhouse.

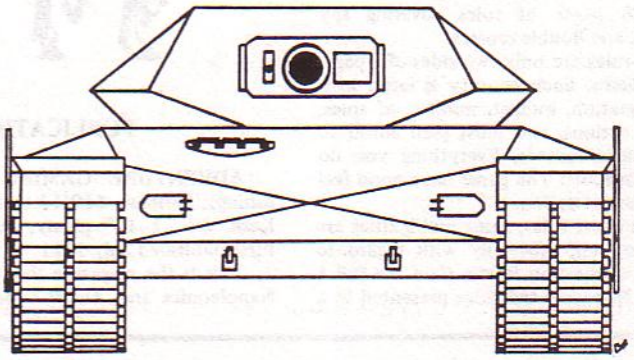
The two most entertaining aspects of AofA are the simultaneity of the action and the "surprise" factor of getting to the page and finding that you've picked right or wrong. Never has so much been created by so little.

Three minor comments: first, the basic rules are in the German book, while the advanced rules are in the Allied book. Hence, looking up the fine points is something of a bother for the odd player out. Second, it might be possible to "work the thing out." After a while repeated play could leave players too familiar with the common combinations. Finally, the possible applications of this system are staggering: tanks, spacecraft, or anything else that moves – all with no counters, no maps, and rules that read like a short article in *Time*.

So far Nova has been concentrating on permutations of the WWI dogfight. Plans call for a series on WWII aircraft, and we can only hope that some wise publisher will run, not walk, to get a license for other areas. In the meantime, enjoy trying to figure out how this little paper computer always gets you back to the same page with the right pictures showing.

– Nick Schuessler

HALT!



YOUR COMMAND AWAITS YOU IN: OPERATION: SKYBOLT

OPERATION: SKYBOLT, Computer War Game Corporation's NEW Play-by-Mail (PBM) wargame, portrays one of the major battle zones of a great Civil War occurring on the homeworld of an alien solar system. The invading lunar Colonists and defending Worlders, using conventional weapons and forces remarkably similar to those of modern-day Earth, attempt to wrest or maintain control of one of the few habitable regions left untouched by the nuclear devastation caused by a recent Worlder war.

FEATURING:

- A Chain of Command: The Army/Corps Commander directing the movements, support, and supply for the powerful Divisions under his command; The 9 Division Commanders controlling the actual cutting edge of this awesome force; the deadly armor and infantry battalions.
- New computer-generated maps each turn, showing current locations of all known units, the roads, rivers, railroads, cities, airfields, and terrain.
- Complete casualty and status reports each turn for all your units.
- No codes and few abbreviations to decipher.
- We handle all the math and record-keeping so that you can concentrate on strategy and tactics as you fight your way to victory.

Games will start in December, and for the months of October and November ONLY, we are offering FREE setup to new players. Turns are $4.00 for Division Commanders and $5.00 for Army/Corps Commanders. Turns are every 21 days. Rules are $1.00. We guarantee your money back if you don't like the game after the first turn. To join a game, just send a check or money order for $10.00 to:

Computer War Games Corp., Dept S2
93 Hill Street, San Francisco, CA 94110.

SPIES! (SPI); $15 boxed, $13 softpack. Designed by John Prados and Lenny Glynn. 8 pages of rules/charts, 250 playing pieces, 22" x 34" map, die. 2-5 players; playing time 2-3 hours. Published 1981.

It is 1933. The European powers (France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Russia) engage in espionage to prepare for the coming war. Each country starts its turn by playing an event tile, representing the general course of history. Events may give any of the players additional money and action chits, if they happen to be in the right place at the right time. Next, the national security police are called into action to root out spies inside the borders, though the well-prepared spy will have a set of papers. Spies are then moved along the rail, air, and sea lines which connect the various cities. The next phase is the actual spy business: you can play an action chit to attempt to uncover or block discovery of secrets (such as the A-bomb, code devices, and military hardware), or to sanction (kill) an enemy spy. Through all this, diplomacy between players is allowed. Play proceeds until 1939, when victory points from learning secrets and killing or capturing spies are totalled. The advanced game adds an additional 2½ pages of rules covering spy havens, drops, and double crosses.

The basic rules are only two sides of a page, and easy to learn. Each country is faced with limited information, budget, number of spies, and possible actions, and must plan ahead to optimize these resources. Everything you do represents a tradeoff. The game has a good feel of pre-WWII covert action.

With such short rules, some ambiguities are bound to crop up, especially with regard to inter-nation cooperation if less than the full 5 players play. Nor were the rules presented in a completely logical order. During the course of play, a nation might be reduced so much that it can do virtually nothing, much less interact with the other countries. The price tag is a little more than I'd like to pay for what is essentially a parlor game.

I'd recommend this game to anyone who wants a simple, but not shallow, game he can play with several players. Given the price, this would be a good buy for a gaming club.

–David Dunham

PUBLICATIONS

ADVENTURE GAMING (Manzakk Publishing); $3/issue, $29/13 issues. Edited by Tim Kask. 8½" x 11" glossy, 36 pages. Monthly. First published July 1981.

This is the magazine that covers it all, from Napoleonics and *Awful Green Things* to *Top Secret* and monster-level WWII. The premiere issue contains several fantasy game variants, a convention report from Cangames 81, a cartoon strip, and columns by John Prados and Kathleen Pettigrew striking blows for wargaming and female gamers respectively.

"Excellent" is the word for the cartoons. From the featured "Adventures of Space Trader Vic" to the little fill-up-the-space cartoons, they are genuinely funny. A rare treat. The photographs from the convention are noteworthy, and the *Civilization* review did the remarkable by singling out a new and very obscure game. The John Prados column is of note because of Prados' stature in the hobby, regardless of the intrinsic worth of what he has to say.

Now for the bad news. The quality of the premiere issue is extremely uneven. Layout is jerky – too many articles bounce from page 3 to page 17, and why is the table of contents shrunken to anonymity? There is no lead article, nothing strongly of interest, but rather a congregation of unexciting utility articles and some meandering commentaries of being a "good" gamer. There is just one game review. There is nothing here of interest to science fiction boardgamers, which comments on the absurdity of one magazine trying to adequately cover ALL of the gaming hobby.

Maybe some of the promised future features – a figure photo section and a computer column – will put some life in this magazine. As of now, ADVENTURE GAMING is a colorless publication that hasn't gotten itself off the ground. The only reason for subscribing would be if you have a personal motive for helping an all-hobby magazine survey. I don't recommend it.

– W. G. Armintrout

This is Free Trader Beowulf,
calling anyone. . .
Mayday, Mayday. . . we are under
attack. . . main drive is gone. .
turret number one not responding . . .
Mayday. . . losing cabin pressure
fast. . . calling anyone. . . please help. . .
This is Free Trader Beowulf. . .
Mayday. . .

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Science-Fiction Adventure in the Far Future
Game Designers' Workshop

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GDW's award winning SF role-playing game!

Traveller and more than sixty
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203 North Street, Normal, IL 61761 Dept. SG

StarMaster

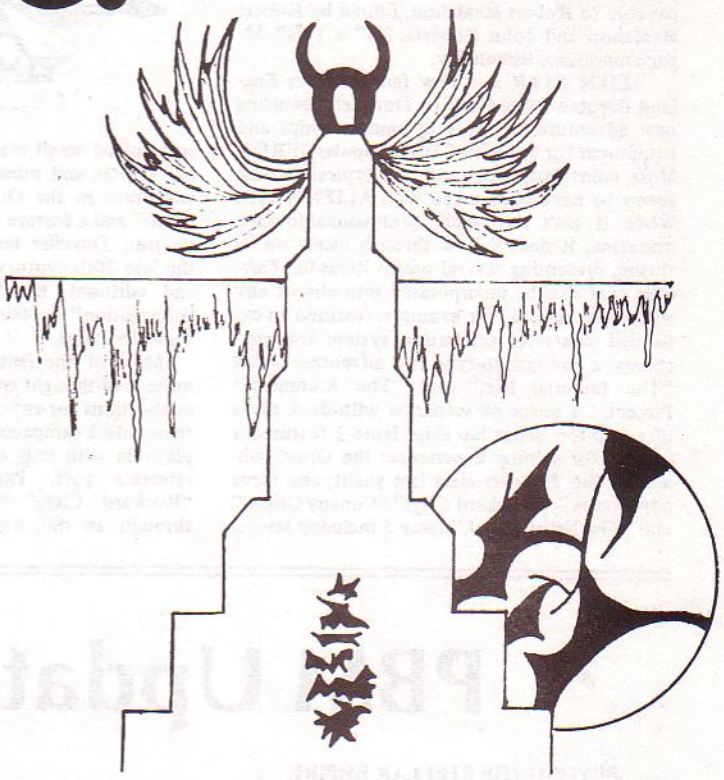
Air screams around your ships as they enter the atmosphere. Missile-launchers fire deafeningly to port and starboard while atmosphere-fighters drop in shrieking dives from their hangers below. Warriors, tightly clenching their weapons, check their pressure suits one last time and climb in grim silence into their landing shuttles. In the distance five more heavy cruisers of your empire are firing and unloading their cargo, their hulls gleaming crimson in the light of the red sun above.

This is not a drill. Already laser and missile fire from the mile-wide guardian fortresses below have turned the sky into an exploding nightmare of smoke, fire, and fragmented metal. Planes and shuttles twist and dodge down towards a landscape rapidly becoming an inferno of flame and radiation.

This is no mere raid. For years your people had explored nearby systems without violence, trading technology to the primitive civilizations there in exchange for raw materials. Some species had even thought you gods.

Then you met the Aeratang. Merciless, brutal, they destroyed your exploring ships and began to slaughter your colonies. But you found their home planet and launched the greatest fleet your kind ever built to carry the war to your enemy. To fight for your very survival.

Will it be enough?



Starmaster is a correspondence game of galactic exploration, diplomacy, and conquest allowing for interaction not only between each player and the worlds of the galaxy, but between the players themselves.

New players begin further out from the Galactic Center than established players allowing them to develop themselves among equals. You may lead a powerful reptilian race, carving out a vast empire of colony and subject worlds; or perhaps an insectoid species, engaged in a holy crusade to convert the galaxy to the worship of their many-legged god.

As chosen ruler of your people, you must decide what diplomatic and military policies will be followed in order to lead your kind to dominance among the sentient beings of the galaxy.

The galaxies of StarMaster are a complete fantasy environment of solar systems, with geographies ranging from worlds near absolute zero to worlds where rivers of molten tungsten bubble, with technologies spanning from rock-throwing cave-dwellers to advanced Elder Races with near-godlike abilities.

Nor is the StarMaster environment limited in terms of playing area. There are multiple galaxies allowing for extra-galactic invasions across the voids. There are both natural and constructed gateways to (and from!) other dimensions and parallel universes.

StarMaster is limitless in possibilites, bounded only by imagination! It is a game where, literally, anything is possible.

StarMaster offers these features:

- Design your species as if you could have directed evolution to this moment.
- Design your homeworld in terms of temperature, atmosphere, and mass.
- Choose your government and social order.
- You decide the production for all worlds of your empire, building colonizing ships, merchantmen, warships, warriors, and fortresses.
- Technology increases steadily, permitting faster, larger ships, deadlier weapons, and scientific breakthroughs.

The galaxies are dotted with the ruins of Elder civilizations lacking the strength to master the stars. Can you lead your world to greatness where so many others fell short?

StarMaster may be entered for $12.00 which includes the first two turns, set up turn, a rule book and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, turns are $3.50 each. A rule book may be purchased separately for $3.50.

Send to: **Schubel & Son**
P.O. Box 214848
Sacramento, CA 95821

Enter me in StarMaster

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

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ALIEN STAR (16 Egdon Drive, Merley, Wimbourne, Dorset BH21 1TY England); single copy – 60 p., U.K.; £1.60 airmail, £.80 surface U.S.; £9.60 one-year subscription, U.S.; payable to Robert McMahon. Edited by Robert McMahon and John Roberts. 8¼" x 11¾" 32-page magazine. Bimonthly.

ALIEN STAR is a new fanzine from England devoted exclusively to *Traveller*, featuring new adventures, rules supplements, ships and equipment for use with GDW's popular SFRPG. More pains than usual with the typical fanzine seems to have been taken with ALIEN STAR. While it isn't any slick, professional-looking magazine, it does follow through nicely on its theme, presenting several useful items for *Traveller* that can be incorporated into almost any campaign. Issue 1, for example, featured an expanded character generation system for merchants; a commando-type raid adventure called "The Imperial Hit;" and "The Archimedes Project," a series of scenarios with deck plans of a 600-ton Scout lab ship. Issue 2 featured a system for gaining experience; the Orion subsector; the *Traveller*-class fast yacht; and three adventures – "Rockard City," "Convoy Orion," and "The Night Spiral." Issue 3 included several

customized small craft (fighter, lifeboat, combat shuttle and mining craft), a complete solo adventure in the Orion subsector called "Funeral;" and a feature converting the Space Shuttle into *Traveller* terms for orbital combat in the late 20th century. Regular columns include and editorial, the "Armoury" and "X-Boat Information" – a feature on new and upcoming *Traveller* items.

Most of the features in ALIEN STAR are quite well-thought out and will have immediate applications for anyone who wishes to integrate them into a campaign. The adventures are easily playable with only a bit of extra work on the referee's part. Particularly interesting are "Rockard City," which concerns a search through an old, deserted starport, and "The Night Spiral," which actually takes characters into another dimension. And "Funeral" appears to be the first adventure for *Traveller* actually designed to be played solo. The Armoury has presented several interesting items of equipment, from wire cutters to orbital mines. And the space shuttle feature includes a Russian shuttle, laser satellite and orbital station, plus a new, simpler vector-movement system.

ALIEN STAR does have some of the flaws evident in most fanzines – typewritten copy, occasional run-on sentences, a too-informal style at times and an in-joke here or there. Still, it doesn't share the problem some fanzines have of near incoherency. What occasional places I found that were less than clear were probably due to cultural differences. If you're accustomed to fanzines at all, you'll find little to fault in ALIEN STAR. The only real problem is that subscriptions, until an American distributor is located, must be in British pounds sterling. And issues 1 and 2 are already sold out.

If you're a real *Traveller* fanatic, you'll definitely find much of interest in ALIEN STAR. But better hurry before issue 3 (and the recent issue 4) sells out, too.

–William A. Barton

PBM Update

BEYOND THE STELLAR EMPIRE (Adventures by Mail)

Company News. Adventures by Mail began processing turns during the third week of July. One month later we are pleased to announce that we have acquired a second (plus part of a third) computer system to handle the response generated by our direct mail campaign. This will allow our full time gamemasters to continue processing and mailing players' turns within one working day of receipt.

We are interested in corresponding with designers of PBM games who are looking for a company to moderate their game. We are only interested in quality games and preferably games which are completely processed by computer. Write us before sending any designs.

–Robert Cook
–Jack Everitt

UNIVERSE III (Central Texas Computing)

Game News:

Quadrant V. Two new organizations, the Explorers Guild and the Alliance, are forming, and appear to rival the Independent Scout Service in size. Several Terran ships appear to have forsaken all alliances and gone rogue, attacking other Terrans. The wreckage of two Terran starships has been recovered. Both had suffered extensive battle damage, which suggests the presence of forces hostile to the Terran explorers. This may be connected with vague reports from the Etuel of Mvar and Regajian incursions into the quadrant.

Company News. Quadrant VI is almost complete, and should be open between late September and mid-October. Work on a tribal/medieval game, tentatively entitled "Nomads," progresses. Completion time is dependent on the acquisition of 5 megabyte hard disk drives promised from Apple.

–David Bolduc

UNIVERSE II (Clemens & Associates)

Game News:

Quadrant I. Major battle fleets have assembled in the Arcturus-Vindemiatrix corridor. Their intention is unknown.

Quadrant II. Regajian successes in other quadrants are having a positive effect on the number of starship commanders who are joining the Regajian Empire.

Quadrant III. The Terran invasion of the Muar Empire has caused the Muar to denude their boundaries to meet the threat in Commander Arak's area.

Quadrant IV. Many feel it is only a matter of time before the Muar retaliate for the IDC incursions into Muar space.

Company News. My planned vacation has been cancelled, and turns will be processed as usual.

–Jon Clemens

THE TRIBES OF CRANE (Schubel & Son)

Crane I was the scene of two major sieges of walled cities. The small barbarian city of Burgos held against a Horde attack, something many larger cities had failed to do. Only time will tell if the Horde will again gather before its walls in even greater number. There is indication that Desert Barbarians, made proud by the defense of the barbarian city, are even now gathering in sizable numbers to offer additional support to the city. At the city of Yang a force composed of the Anoa, Black Camel and War Wolf, began a siege operations aimed at taking the city of Yang. Before a full-scale attack on the city could take place, a strong Blood Trust relief column arrived, completely routing the siege forces and driving them off. At Zula, the city has driven the attacker back and although much rebuilding must be done, it looks like the city is at least for now secure.

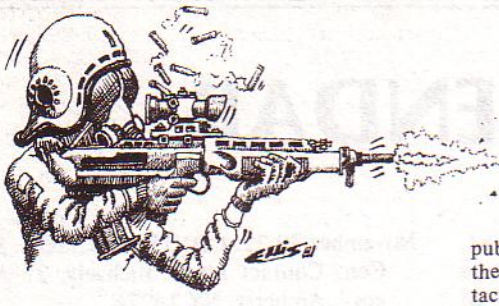
On Crane II the Northern Clan Alliance succeeded in taking the city of Downs from their long-time enemy Darkon. Darkon was, however, successful in escaping from the city with a small bodyguard on fast longships. It seems this battle between Kinglord Firehell of Howe and Darkon of Downs is not yet concluded.

STARMASTER (Schubel & Son)

The Central Galaxy continues to be an area of constant military struggle as starfaring races attempt to build powerful empires. At Salamander 5 a fierce space battle was fought between the Aryan Democracy, Kingdom of the Chosen and the defending Prothoria. The Prothoria were able to hold off the attackers from a full-scale invasion of their planet, but they took many heavy losses including 16 megacities destroyed and another 14 damaged by tornado generators and electric storm generators launched by attacking space cruisers. It will be most interesting to see if the Prothorians will retaliate. They do not forget easily! In the Northeast Galaxy at Warlock 1, the fortunes of war have switched back and forth again and again as additional allies lend their strength to the forces already engaged. The Menzronian Empire had been successful in taking Warlock 1, home of the Tryterans, but new allies of the Tryterans have attacked and weakened their fleets. On the planet surface the victorious Menzronians encountered trouble. Many of the Tryteran workers refused to man the factories and a strong underground guerilla force was formed. Currently, the Menzronian "Hands within Squares" flag flies above the cities of Warlock 1. The Tryterans and their allies still hope to restore their "Spears and Glaciers" flag. It looks like a long fight ahead!

–George Schubel

PBM Update reports on professionally-moderated play-by-mail games. Notices are monthly. Copy deadline is 60 days previous to the first of the month, for the issue in which the notice is to appear. (Deadline for the March issue is January 1.) All copy should be typed and double-spaced. Notices should not exceed 200 words in length. TSG reserves the right to edit copy as necessary.



LETTERS

Thank you for mentioning me in TSG 42 GEV contest results – I am surprised I was the only one to deduce the typo. The command to have the GEV's ram the Ogre without firing was an apparent misinterpretation of the rules on my part. Rules 6.133 and 6.134 of my copy (1st edition) of GEV led me to believe that any ramming during the overrun was to take place immediately after the first fire round (defender's). Thus, the kamikazes had no chance to fire. Even if they did, the greatest possible odds would be 4-1 (2 GEV's – one is destroyed by the surviving 1 INF, and cannot fire – rule 6.133), resulting in a "D" result (rule 6.152 and CRT). Yet, if you will recall, I sent in two solutions: the one mentioned and one nearly identical to the solution submitted by Mr. Lefstin, except for the same forementioned overrun alteration. This would still give a victory: +3 (Mr. Lefstin's solution) -1 (no AP zap) = +2. Since a total of 6 prizes could have been awarded, it may be fair to ask for it.

While on the subject, Mr. Kelly's solution, although as much of a winning answer as the published solution, is not 6 points better than the published solution. After trying the same tactics as Mr. Kelly, I thought I was on to the answer. True, the odds on the 1 INF are 7-2 (3-1) and result in a "D," but this is spillover fire (rule 6.141), and is reduced to a "No Effect" on the 1 INF.

Joseph Zaepfel
Tucson, AZ

It seems that Mr. Rennert overlooked one of the Combine player's options in his solution to the GEV contest. I'd like to direct his attention to rule 6.134 which states "(2) In an overrun, an Ogre may ram any one enemy unit (except another Ogre or infantry), destroying it, at the end of its first fire round." In his solution Mr. Rennert overran the Ogre and a 1 INF to shoot off an AP gun and ram the Ogre destroying its two remaining treads. However, if the INF destroys one GEV and the Ogre rams one, only one GEV is left to attack the AP gun. This results in a 2-1 attack, not good enough to ensure a kill. Thus, Mr. Rennert's solution produces a draw not a Paneuropean victory.

Bob Hensle
Palouse, WA

There was much that was right on the button in last issue's Deus Ex Machina column on selecting a computer; however, there were some omissions and misapprehensions, particularly concerning RFI. All personal computers made in the past few months have been required to comply with new FCC regulations concerning RFI. This resulted in an increase of about $150 in the rock-bottom wholesale mail order price of the Apple II. However, RFI worries should not bother prospective buyers of the Apple II.

One major computer that was passed over in the article was the Commodore PET. It was the very first personal computer (not counting the stoneage Altairs and others of the "hacker" ilk). Its main features of note were an IEEE standard instrumentation interface bus and a truly horrible calculator keyboard which has since been changed to a normal typewriter keyboard. Educators latched on to this one more than computer gamers did, so much of the available software is CAI, although the graphics characters present interesting possibilities to the computer game designer.

One short note about the IBM personal computer: it seems that they are going to do this one right: Microsoft is writing the Basic language for them. They are not making the mistake of forcing the mainframe mentality into a micro-sized package.

Earl S. Cooley III
Houston, TX

NEWS & PLUGS

Games Workshop has announced it has taken over Citadel Miniatures as of Sept. 1. The company also has a new address: 27-29 Sunbeam Road, Park Royal, London, NW10, England. Telephone: 01-965-3713.

Nova Game Designs has released a sequel to *Ace of Aces*, called *Powerhouse*. Scheduled for December is *Bounty Hunter*, a game of the same system, based on a fight in and around an Old West saloon.

Trevor Graver of Games Workshop (27-29 Sunbeam Road, Park Royal, London NW10) publishes the 4-page, digest-sized *Dark Star*, a *Traveller* newsletter. Single issue 20 pence (with SASE); 3-issue sub one pound.

FGU has released a Wild West role-playing game called, appropriately enough, *Wild West*. Price: $11.00.

Former SPI staffer Dave Ritchie is now a designer at TSR.

Stan Johansen Miniatures is discontinuing the following series: "Fictioneers," "Shogun Warriors," and "Warlord."

FASA, Orisek Industries and Mayfair Games have announced that they will henceforth be in joint offices at 2201 S. Halstead, Chicago, IL 60608. Phone numbers (all area code 312): Mayfair 243-7700, FASA 243-7701, Orisek 243-7702.

New from Strategic Simulations: *The Battle of Shiloh* and *The Battle of the Bulge: Tigers in the Snow*. Both are available on disk for the 48K Apple; price $39.95. Also, on cassette for the 16K TRS-80; price $24.95.

Leo Christopherson's latest: *Voyage of the Valkyrie*, an SF combat/exploration game for the Apple and TRS-80. Available from Advanced Operating Systems.

Gray Cat Castings (1817 Ohlen, Austin, TX 78758) offers a licensed line of *Star Trek* ships. The first release is a Kzinti carrier, to sell for $6.00.

Sir-tech Software (6 Main St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669) offers the FRP game *Wizardry*, which has 3-D graphics, and allows adventures with up to six saveable characters at a time. 48K disk for the Apple. Price: $49.95.

New from Creative Computing Software: *Mad Bomber* and *Blister Ball*. Both 48K disks for the Apple; price: $29.95.

For the Atari: *Pub Games, Cribbage, Math Games* and *Chase Games*. Available on cassette for $11.95, or disk for $24.95.

Steve Cole has retired as a Task Force Games partner, in order to devote more time to his family and career in engineering. He is still working as a free-lancer, and has contracted to do all the expansions for *Star Fleet Battles*. Right now, new scenarios are "desperately needed." Steve asks gamers with questions or new SFB material to write him at Amarillo Design Bureau (P.O. Box 3012, Amarillo, TX 79106).

FASA will soon be publishing a "Consumers Guide" of equipment for *Traveller* characters.

Sites for Origins '82 and '83 have been announced. The former will be held in Baltimore, the latter in Detroit.

Automated Simulations has released two expansion programs for its earlier games. *The Upper Reaches of Apshai* is an expansion for *Temple of Apshai; The Keys of Acheron* is an expansion for *Hellfire Warrior*. Either is available on 16K or 32K disk for the TRS-80, or on 48K disk for the Apple. Price each: $19.95.

Automated Simulations has released the graphic adventure *Sorcerer of Siva*, in which the hero is a wizard. Available on 16K cassette or 32K disk for the TRS-80, or 48K disk for the Apple. Price: $29.95.

Gamer's Guide has ceased publication due to low circulation. The last issue was number 4. Copies of issues 1-4 are still available.

Hippocrene Books has published *Fantasy Role-Playing Games*. 224 pages, hardbound. Price: $14.95.

Marion Bates (P.O. Box 381, Kalkaska, MI 49646) publishes the amateur zine *Plague Times*. 12 pages, 5½" x 8½". Price: $6.00/ten issues.

ADVERTISERS

Automated Simulations 13
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California Pacific . . . . *inside front cover*
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DERBY OF DEATH
A Car Wars/Undead Variant

"There he is, Van Helsing! Doing about 95 on that cycle!"

"T'ank you, Harker. We will choot him wit der two forward linked stake-launchers. Be ready . . ."

"Watch out! He's turning himself into an oil slick!"

* * *

(FURTHER ADVENTURES OF) DERBY OF DEATH
An Unforgiveable Car Wars/ Undead Variant

"All right, Drac, it's 9 o'clock. What do you do?"

"I vill load 10 coffins into the back of the pickup, and at 10 vill go to Fleet Street. At 11 I vill unload, and at midnight I vant to drive in front of the hunters' lodgings and drop a few mines."

* * *

"Oh, Doctor Van Helsing, I'm so glad you've come. It's Betsy, my little (sniff) Chevy. Her gas tank was – was – *sucked dry*."

"Madame, we will haf to hold watch tonight. I fear for all our lives if Betsy starts up tomorrow."

CALENDAR

November 6-8: ARMAGEDDON '81. AD&D and wargaming con. Contact ARMAGEDDON '81, University of Houston Central Campus, Houston, TX 77004.

November 13-14: TEXCON 1981. D&D, Car Wars, other games. Howard Johnson's IH 35 N., Austin. Contact: David Ladyman, 8028 Gessner No. 1805, Austin, TX 78753.

November 14-15: ALPHACON III. SF and gaming. Contact c/o Bill Freebairn, 310 N. Sunset Dr., Ithaca, NY 14850.

November 20-22: CONTRADICTION. SF Con. Contact Linda Michaels, 27 Argosy, Amherst, NY 14226.

January 23-25: GAMES CON. Wargaming. Contact Games Con 1982, P.O. Box 1016, CANBERRA ACT 2601 AUSTRALIA.

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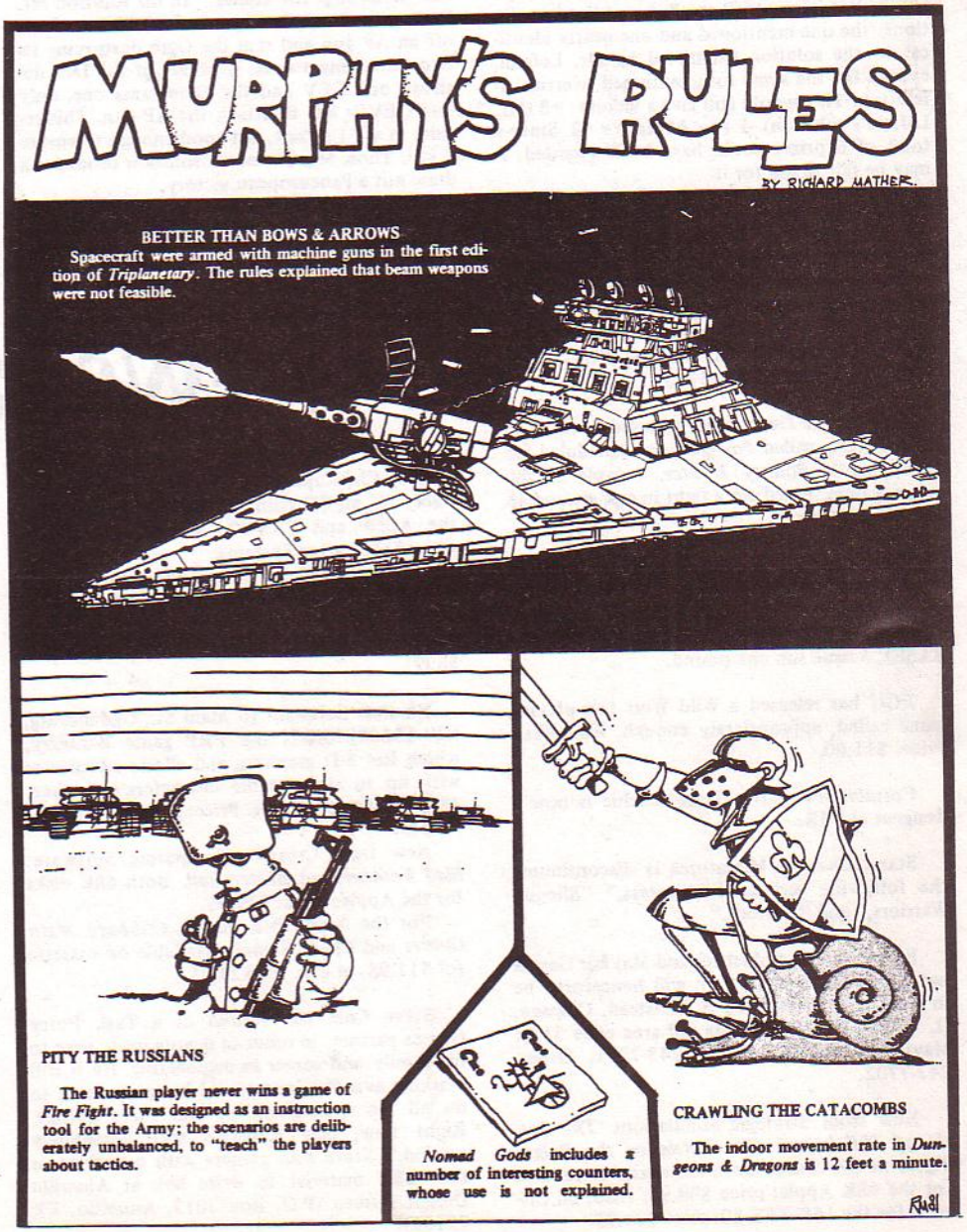
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BY RICHARD MATHER.
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Spacecraft were armed with machine guns in the first edition of Triplanetary. The rules explained that beam weapons were not feasible.
PITY THE RUSSIANS
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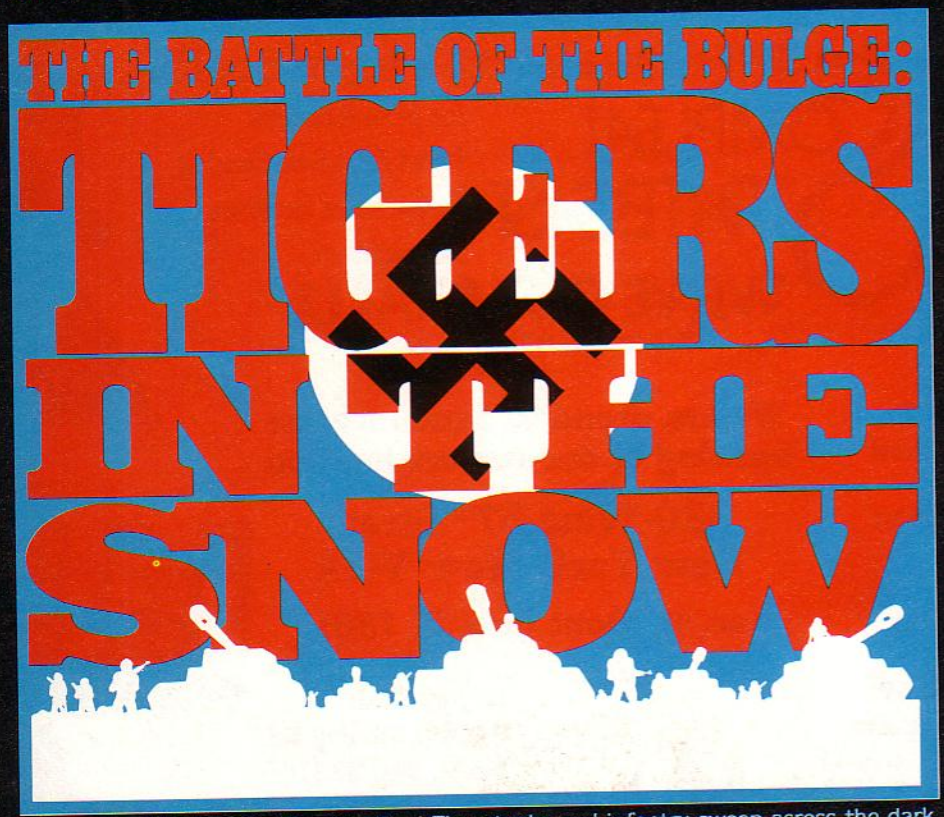

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